

**Tampa Palms Community Development District  
&  
Tampa Palms Owners Association  
Employee Handbook**



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

This document has been developed by Tampa Palms CDD (CDD) and Tampa Palms Owners Association (TPOA) in order to familiarize employees with Tampa Palms and provide information about working conditions, key policies, procedures, and benefits affecting employment at Tampa Palms.

### 1.1 Welcome

Welcome to Tampa Palms! We are happy to have you as a new member of our family!

The mission of Tampa Palms is provide for the residents of Tampa Palms a standard of excellence in service, facilities, and programs that serves the needs of the residents and enriches the Tampa Palms community image;

### 1.2 History

Tampa Palms is an exclusive mix-use, planned community complete with homes, shops, offices, apartment homes, churches, recreational facilities, schools and dining facilities. Designed by engineering team of Post, Buckley, Schuh & Jernigan, Tampa Palms has been awarded the coveted Aurora Award by the Southeast Homebuilders Association and was named “the top master planned community in the US” by the National Association of Homebuilders.

Today, original Tampa Palm includes Tampa Palms 1 & 2.

Tampa Palms 1 & 2, which makes up the Tampa Palms CDD and Tampa Palms Owners Association, includes:

- Twenty-four residential villages with 2,277 homes.
- Three apartment villages with 1110 apartment homes in the TPOA
- Two apartment villages adjacent to USF (TP CDD only) with 1000 homes
- One golf course and country club/resort (private)
- One meeting, swim and tennis center (Compton Park)
- Four office complexes (Somerset, Palm Lake, The Villas at Amberly & Fla Executive Realty)
- Five parks, including one on the Hillsborough River with docks and camping
- Three churches
- One elementary school
- One child care center
- Two shopping and dining centers

### 1.3 Changes in Policy

While every effort is made to keep the contents of this document current, Tampa Palms reserves the right to modify, suspend, or terminate any of the policies, procedures, and/or benefits described in the manual with or without prior notice to employees.

## **2 EMPLOYEE DEFINITION AND STATUS**

An “employee” of Tampa Palms is a person who regularly works for Tampa Palms on a wage (non-exempt) or salary basis (exempt) for either the CDD or the TPOA. An “employee” may receive compensation through a third-party leasing company.

### **2.1 Employment Classification**

Employees of Tampa Palms are classified as either “exempt” or “non-exempt.” This is necessary because, by law, employees in certain types of jobs are entitled to overtime pay for hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours per workweek.

In addition to the above overtime classifications, every employee is assigned an employment status classification: regular full-time, regular part-time, temporary (full-time or part-time), regular hourly, contingent hourly, etc.

### **2.2 Probationary Period for New Employees**

Tampa Palms monitors and evaluates every new employee’s performance for three months to determine whether further employment in a specific position or with Tampa Palms is appropriate.

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### **3 EMPLOYMENT POLICIES**

#### **3.1 Equal Employment Opportunity**

Tampa Palms is an equal employment opportunity employer. Employment decisions are based on merit and business needs, and not on race, color, citizenship status, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, age, weight, religion, creed, physical or mental disability, marital status, veteran status, political affiliation, or any other factor protected by law.

#### **3.2 Americans with Disabilities Act**

It is the policy of Tampa Palms to comply with all the relevant and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Tampa Palms will not discriminate against any qualified employee or job applicant with respect to any terms, privileges, or conditions of employment because of a person's physical or mental disability.

#### **3.3 Immigration Law Compliance**

All offers of employment are contingent on verification of the candidate's right to work in the United States. On the first day of work, every new employee will be asked to provide original documents verifying his or her right to work and, as required by federal law, to sign Federal Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification Form.

#### **3.4 Employee Background Check**

Prior to making an offer of employment, Tampa Palms may conduct a job-related background check. A comprehensive background check may consist of prior employment verification, professional reference checks, education confirmation and credit check.

#### **3.5 Criminal Records**

When appropriate, a criminal record check is performed to protect Tampa Palms interest and that of its employees and residents.

#### **3.6 Anniversary Date**

The first day an employee reports to work is his or her official anniversary date. This anniversary date is used to compute the following benefit:

- End of probationary period.

### **3.7 New Employee Orientation**

The formal welcoming process, or “employee orientation,” is conducted by the CDD Staff Consultant or TPOA Community Director, and includes an overview of Tampa Palms and the processes necessary to operate in an environment of a unit of State of Florida government (CDD) or a not for profit owners association under FS 720 (TPOA).

### **3.8 Personnel Records and Administration**

The task of handling personnel records and related administration functions at Tampa Palms is managed by the CDD Staff Consultant and/or TPOA Community Director. Personnel files will be kept confidential at all times and include some or all of the following documents:

- Application and Contact Data
- Any FICA or banking information

### **3.9 Change of Personal Data**

Any change in an employee’s name, address, telephone number, marital status, dependents, or insurance beneficiaries, or a change in the number of tax withholding exemptions, needs to be reported in writing without delay to the TPOA Community Director or the CDD Staff Consultant.

### **3.10 Safety**

The safety and health of employees is a priority. Tampa Palms makes every effort to comply with all federal and state workplace safety requirements. Tampa Palms’ workplace safety rules and regulations are reviewed periodically and posted for convenience and review.

Each employee is expected to obey safety rules and exercise caution and common sense in all work activities.

### **3.11 Building Security**

Each and every employee must follow the building security rules and regulations listed here:

- Employees furnished with keys to any building must not provide those keys to any other person- not even other employees.
- Any lost key should be reported immediately to the CDD Administrative Manager or TPOA Community Director.
- The CDD Administrative Manager will established procedures for closing Tampa Palms CDD Building and locking facility gates. At a minimum these procedures will include:
  - Always double-check door locks, set the alarms, and
  - Lock the parking lot gate when leaving.



- The TPOA Community Director will established procedures for closing TPOA buildings and Tampa Palms parks and locking facility gates. At a minimum these procedures will include:
  - Always double-check door locks, set the alarms (if any) , and
  - Lock the parking lot gate when leaving

Employees are not allowed on Tampa Palms property after hours without prior authorization from the CDD Staff Consultant, TPOA Community Director or any CDD or TPOA Board Member.

### **3.12 Personal Property**

No employee may take responsibility for personal property belonging to a resident or other employee by offering to hold the property, store it in a Tampa Palms building or watch it in a Tampa Palms facility.

The TPOA office at Compton Park maintains a lost system that efficiently tracks lost and found property reports.

Any employee finding lost personal property should notify the CDD Administrative Manager or TPOA Community Manager. Anyone seeking information about lost or found property may do so by contacting the TPOA Community Manager at 977-3337 or the CDD Consultant at 813 977-3393. Tampa Palms assumes no risk for any loss or damage to personal property and recommends that all employees have personal insurance policies covering the loss of personal property left at the office.

### **3.13 Health-related Issues**

Employees who become aware of any health-related issue should notify TPOA Community Director or CDD Consultant of the health status as soon as possible.

### **3.14 Employee Requiring Medical Attention**

If an employee is hurt or if an employee observes another employee or visitor who is hurt the employee should follow these steps:

1. Provide immediate aide to the injured person
2. Call 9-1-1 if deemed necessary
3. Report all work-related injuries and accidents immediately to TPOA Community Director or CDD Consultant.

### **3.15 Visitors in the Workplace**

For safety, insurance, and other business considerations, only authorized visitors and residents are allowed in the Tampa Palms CDD workplaces. When making arrangements for visitors, employees should request that visitors contact the CDD Administrative Manager or CDD Consultant.

### **3.16 Employment of Relatives**

Tampa Palms is pleased to consider for employment qualified applicants who are related to employees. When Tampa Palms employs more than one member of a family, one family member may not supervise the other. If such a situation should arise and the employees are unable to develop a workable solution, the CDD Community Director or CDD Consultant will decide which employee may be transferred.

### **3.17 Weather-related and Emergency-related Closings**

At times, emergencies such as severe weather, fires, or power failures can disrupt Tampa Palms operations. In such instances, the CDD Administrative Manager or CDD Consultant or the TPOA Community Director will decide on the closure and will provide the official notification to the residents.

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## **4 STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

### **4.1 General Guidelines**

All employees are urged to become familiar with Tampa Palms Park Rules and standards of conduct and are expected to follow these rules and standards faithfully in doing their own jobs and conducting Tampa Palms' business.

### **4.2 Attendance and Punctuality**

Tampa Palms expects employees to be ready to work at the beginning of assigned daily work hours, and to reasonably complete their projects by the end of assigned work hours.

### **4.3 Work Schedule**

Unless otherwise specified, regular full-time employees are expected to work no more than forty (40) hours per workweek. Schedules will be established by the CDD Administrative Manager or TPOA Community Director.

### **4.4 Absence and Lateness**

From time to time, it may be necessary for an employee to be late or absent from work. Tampa Palms is aware that emergencies, illnesses, or pressing personal business that cannot be scheduled outside work hours may arise. It is the responsibility of all employees to contact CDD Administrative Manager or TPOA Community Director if they will be absent or late.

### **4.5 Unscheduled Absence**

Absence from work for three (3) consecutive days without notifying management or the will be considered a voluntary resignation.

### **4.6 Meal and Break Periods**

Employees are allowed a one-hour lunch break generally between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

Tampa Palms encourages employees to take a rest period as needed during both the morning and afternoon work periods.

## 4.7 Harassment Policy

Tampa Palms does not tolerate workplace harassment. Workplace harassment can take many forms. It may be, but is not limited to, words, signs, offensive jokes, cartoons, pictures, posters, e-mail jokes or statements, pranks, intimidation, physical assaults or contact, or violence.

## 4.8 Sexual Harassment Policy

Tampa Palms does not tolerate sexual harassment. Sexual harassment may include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other unwelcome verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature that creates an offensive, hostile, intimidating working environment, or any act or statement that affects another individual's personal dignity and prevents an individual from effectively performing the duties of their position.

Sexual Harassment is a form of sex discrimination that can occur when:

- The submission to unwelcome physical conduct of a sexual nature, to unwelcome requests for sexual favors, or to other verbal conduct of a sexual nature is made an implicit or explicit term or condition of employment; or
- The submission to or rejection of unwelcome physical conduct of a sexual nature, unwelcome requests for sexual favors, or other verbal conduct of a sexual nature is used as a basis for academic or employment decisions or evaluations; or
- Unwelcome physical acts of a sexual nature, unwelcome requests for sexual favors, or other verbal conduct of a sexual nature have the effect of creating an objectively hostile environment that interferes with employment or affects one's personal dignity on account of sex.

### Reporting

Anyone who believes that he or she has been subjected to a violation of this policy or related retaliation is strongly encouraged to promptly report such behavior to the CDD Staff Consultant or any CDD Board Member or to the TPOA Community Director or to any TPOA Board member.

- Incidents should be reported as soon as possible after the time of their occurrence to allow the Tampa Palms to take appropriate remedial action. No employee should assume any Tampa Palms official knows about a situation or incident.
- Any official (staff consultant or Board member) who has knowledge of or receives a written or oral report or complaint of a violation of this policy must promptly report it to the District Manager and CDD Board Chairman (CDD only).
- Other persons who suspect a violation of this policy should report it to an appropriate person (district manager, staff consultant or Board member).

### Contact Information:

CDD Lore Yeira

Tampa Palms CDD District Manager  
15310 Amberly Drive, Suite 175  
Tampa, Florida 33647  
813 374-9105

Gene Field

Tampa Palms CDD Chairman  
15834 Sanctuary Drive  
Tampa, Fla 33647  
813 977-1162

#### **4.9 Violence in the Workplace**

Tampa Palms has adopted a policy prohibiting workplace violence. Consistent with this policy, acts or threats of physical violence, including intimidation, harassment, and/or coercion, which involve or affect Tampa Palms or which occur on Tampa Palms or Tampa Palms residents' property, will not be tolerated.

#### **4.10 Confidential Information and Nondisclosure**

By continuing employment with Tampa Palms, employees agree that they will not disclose or use any of Tampa Palms' confidential information, either during or after their employment.

This includes but is not limited to resident telephone numbers or emails, details of facility use or any other information obtained while working for Tampa Palms.

Tampa Palms sincerely hopes that its relationship with its employees will be long-term and mutually rewarding. However, employment with Tampa Palms assumes an obligation to maintain confidentiality, even after an employee leaves Tampa Palms' employment.

#### **4.11 Ethical Standards**

Tampa Palms insists on the highest ethical standards in conducting its business. Doing the right thing and acting with integrity are the two driving forces behind Tampa Palms' great success story. When faced with ethical issues, employees are expected to make the right professional decision consistent with Tampa Palms' principles and standards.

#### **4.12 Dress Code**

Employees of Tampa Palms are expected to present a clean and professional appearance while conducting business, in or outside of the office. Dressing in a fashion that is clearly unprofessional, that is deemed unsafe, or that negatively affects Tampa Palms' reputation or image is not acceptable.

#### **4.13 Use of Equipment**

Tampa Palms will provide employees with the equipment needed to do their job. None of this equipment should be used for personal use, nor removed from the physical confines of Tampa Palms - unless it is approved for a job that specifically requires use of company equipment outside the physical facility.

#### **4.14 Use of Computer, Phone, and Mail**

Tampa Palms property, including computers, phones, electronic mail, and voice mail, should be used only for conducting company business. Incidental and occasional personal use of company computers, phones, or electronic mail and voice mail systems is permitted, but information and messages stored in these systems will be treated no differently from other business-related information and messages.

#### **4.15 Use of Internet**

Employees are responsible for using the Internet in a manner that is ethical and lawful. Use of the Internet must solely be for business purposes and must not interfere with employee productivity.

#### **4.16 Use of Computer Software**

Tampa Palms does not condone the illegal duplication of software. The copyright law is clear. The copyright holder is given certain exclusive rights, including the right to make and distribute copies. Title 17 of the U.S. Code states that “it is illegal to make or distribute copies of copyrighted material without authorization” (Section 106). The only exception is the user’s right to make a backup copy for archival purposes (Section 117).

#### **4.17 Smoking & Alcohol Policy**

Smoking

No smoking of any kind is permitted inside any Tampa Palms office or pavilion.

Alcohol and Substance Abuse

It is the policy of Tampa Palms that the workplace be free of illicit drugs and alcoholic beverages, and free of their use. In addition to damage to respiratory and immune systems, malnutrition, seizures, loss of brain function, liver damage, and kidney damage, the abuse of drugs and alcohol has been proven to impair the coordination, reaction time, emotional stability, and judgment of the user. This could have tragic consequences where demanding or stressful work situations call for quick and sound decisions to be made.

#### **4.18 Gifts**

Advance approval from the CDD Consultant or TPOA Community Director is required before an employee may accept a gift of any kind from a resident. Employees are not permitted to give unauthorized gifts from the CDD or TPOA to residents.

#### **4.19 Solicitations and Distributions**

Solicitation for any cause during working time and in working areas is not permitted. Employees are not permitted to distribute non-Tampa Palms literature in work areas at any time on Tampa Palms property

#### **4.20 Complaint Procedure**

Employees who have a job-related issue, question, or complaint should first discuss it with the Tampa Palms CDD Consultant or TPOA Community Director. Employees who observe, learn of, or, in good faith, suspect a violation of the Standards of Conduct of Tampa Palms should immediately report the violation in accordance with the following procedures:

1. Contact the CDD Consultant or contact the CDD District Manager.. alternatively
2. Contact the TPOA Community Manager or the TPOA President.

#### **4.21 Corrective Procedure**

Unacceptable behavior that does not lead to immediate dismissal may be dealt with in any of the following manners: (a) Oral Reminder, (b) Written Warning, (c) Decision-Making Paid Leave/Counseling Session, (d) Termination, (e) Referral To Law Enforcement.

#### **4.22 Crisis Suspension**

An employee who commits any serious violation of Tampa Palms policies at minimum will be suspended without pay pending an investigation of the situation. Following the investigation, the employee may be terminated without any previous disciplinary action having been taken.

#### **4.23 Employment Termination/Resignation**

After the application of disciplinary steps, if it is determined by management that an employee's performance does not improve, or if the employee is again in violation of Tampa Palms practices, rules, or standards of conduct, following a Decision-Making Leave, employment with Tampa Palms will be terminated.

#### **4.24 Exit Interview**

In a voluntary separation situation, Tampa Palms Consultant or TPOA Community Director would like to conduct an exit interview to discuss the employee's reasons for leaving and any other impressions that the employee may have about Tampa Palms.

#### **4.25 Return of Company Property**

Any Tampa Palms property issued to employees, such as keys, parking passes must be returned to Tampa Palms at the time of termination. Employees will be responsible for any lost or damaged items.



## **5 COMPENSATION POLICIES**

### **5.1 Base Compensation**

It is Tampa Palms' desire to pay all employees, both exempt and non-exempt, wages or salaries that are competitive with other employers in the marketplace and in a way that will be motivational, fair, and equitable. Compensation may vary based on roles and responsibilities, individual, and company performance, and always in compliance with all applicable laws.

### **5.2 Performance Bonuses**

Performance bonuses may be given to Tampa Palms employees at the discretion of TPOA or CDD Board in extraordinary circumstance. There are two factors that typically determine bonus availability and amounts: (a) personal performance, and (b) demonstrated initiative and reliability.

### **5.3 Timekeeping Procedures**

By law, Tampa Palms is obligated to keep accurate records of the time worked by non-exempt employees. Each employee must fill out the appropriate Tampa Palms record of work.

### **5.4 Overtime Pay**

Overtime compensation is paid to non-exempt employees in accordance with federal and state wage and hour restrictions. Tampa Palms does not anticipate assigning more than 40 hours in any week to any non-exempt employees, but should this become necessary, it will be done only under the CDD Consultant's or TPOA Community Director's direction.

Exempt employees are not paid overtime. Tampa Palms does not anticipate exempt employees working more than 40 hours in any week; however, should the needs of the business require, flexibility in assigned work hours will be permitted. No "flex time" will be accrued or carried from year to year or paid out at the end of employment.

### **5.5 Payroll and Paydays**

Regular full-time salary employees (exempt and non-exempt) are paid bi-weekly. The schedule for compensation receipt is available in from the TPOA office or the CDD District Office.

### **5.6 Performance and Salary Reviews**

Tampa Palms wants to help employees to succeed in their jobs and to grow. In an effort to support this growth and success, Tampa Palms has a review process for providing performance feedback.



Salary/wage reviews typically occur in conjunction with the performance review process. The calculation and implementation of changes in base salary/wage depend on both TPOA and CDD needs and personal performance and will typically occur in either Oct or Nov; whichever most closely follows the review cycle.

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## **6 WORKER'S COMPENSATION AND RELATED BENEFITS**

### **6.1 Benefits Summaries and Eligibility**

Neither the CDD nor the TPOA sponsor a benefits program for employees other than time-off benefits.

### **6.2 Worker's Compensation**

All employees are entitled to Workers' Compensation benefits paid by Tampa Palms. This coverage is automatic and immediate and protects employees from work-related injury or illness. If an employee cannot work due to a work-related injury or illness, Workers' Compensation insurance pays his or her medical bills and provides a portion of his or her income until he or she can return to work.

### **6.3 Unemployment Compensation**

Unemployment compensation is designed to provide a temporary income for those who are out of work through no fault of their own. Depending upon the circumstances, employees may be eligible for Unemployment Compensation upon termination of employment with Tampa Palms. The Division of Unemployment Insurance of each State's Department of Labor determines eligibility for Unemployment Compensation. Tampa Palms pays the entire cost of this program.

### **6.4 Social Security**

The United States Government operates a system of mandated insurance known as Social Security. As a wage earner, employees are required by law to contribute a set amount of weekly wages to the trust fund from which benefits are paid. As employer, Tampa Palms is required to deduct this amount from each paycheck an employee receives. In addition, Tampa Palms matches employee contribution dollar for dollar, thereby paying one-half of the cost of employee Social Security benefits.

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## 7 TIME-OFF BENEFITS

### 7.1 PAID TIME OFF

**7.1.1 Vacation Days.** Employees shall receive the following paid leave each calendar year:

- Those employed more than six months and less than five full years shall be entitled to two (2) weeks (TEN work days) of paid vacation leave.
- After completion of five years of employment, employees shall be entitled to three (3) weeks (FIFTEEN work days) of paid vacation leave.
- Vacations may be limited at certain times of year for the purpose of maintaining continuity of coverage and consistent support to residents.
- Unused portions of vacation days from a given year, up to one week (FIVE work days) may be carried forward, but will be lost if not used by March 31 of the year following.
- Unused vacation days will be paid on a pro rata basis upon termination of employment by either party.

**7.1.2 Personal Days.** Employees shall receive SIX (6) paid personal days per calendar year during the term of employment. Any unused portion of personal days will not accrue to the next year and will be lost if the days are not used during the calendar year. Unused personal days will not be paid upon termination of employment by either party.

**7.1.3 Paid Holidays.** New Years Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving Day, the day after Thanksgiving (The TPOA is closed) and Christmas Day are paid holidays that do not count as vacation days or personal days.

CDD employees (as they are employed by a unit of State of Fla government) receive state-mandated holidays which include; Dr. Martin Luther King's Birthday (Monday mid-January), Memorial Day, Labor Day, and Veteran's day.

These state-mandated holidays are in addition to those shown for the TPOA.

**7.1.4 Unpaid leave.** Employees who require an absence in excess of remaining vacation days and personal days may request unpaid leave of limited duration. Unpaid leave must be approved by an officer of the Board of the employing organization. Employees who take more vacation days or personal days than authorized, without permission, will be charged unpaid leave.

**7.1.5 Compensatory time is not authorized.** Time worked in excess of 40 hours per week by exempt employees may not be accrued or taken as vacation days or personal days.

**7.1.6** Employees with less than one year of service may take only one week (5 work days) of paid vacation time and two (2) personal days during the first six months of employment. If unused, this time may be carried over to the second half of the first year of service and combined with remaining vacation time or personal days, but may not be carried beyond.

## **7.2 Jury Duty**

Tampa Palms is committed to supporting the community in which Tampa Palms operates, including supporting Tampa Palms employees in fulfilling their responsibilities to serve as jurors whenever it is possible. When an employee receives notification regarding upcoming jury duty, it is their responsibility to notify the CDD Consultant or TPOA Community Director within one business day of receiving the notice.

## **7.3 Military Reserves or National Guard Leaves of Absence**

Employees who serve in U.S. military organizations or state militia groups such as the National Guard may take the necessary time off to fulfill this obligation and will retain all of their legal rights for continued employment under existing laws.

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## **8 EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS**

### **8.1 Open Communication**

Tampa Palms encourages employees to discuss any issues they may have with any co-worker directly interfacing with that person. If a resolution is not reached, employees should arrange a meeting with their direct supervisor. If the concern, problem, or issue is not properly addressed, employees should contact the CDD District Manager or TPOA Community Manager

Any information discussed in an Open Communication meeting is considered confidential, to the extent possible while still allowing management to respond to the problem. Retaliation against any employee for appropriate usage of Open Communication channels is unacceptable.

### **8.2 Suggestions**

Tampa Palms encourages all employees to bring forward their suggestions and good ideas about making Tampa Palms a better place to work and enhancing service to Tampa Palms residents. Any employee who sees an opportunity for improvement is encouraged to talk it over with the TPOA professional staff or the CDD Administrative Consultant. All suggestions are valued.

### **8.3 Closing Statement**

Successful working conditions and relationships depend upon successful communication. It is important that employees stay aware of changes in procedures, policies, and general information. It is also important to communicate ideas, suggestions, personal goals, or problems as they affect work at Tampa Palms.

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## 9 ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Tampa Palms Employment Policies, and I do commit to read and follow these policies.

I am aware that if, at any time, I have questions regarding Tampa Palms company policies I should direct them to my manager or the Human Resources Department.

I know that Tampa Palms policies and other related documents do not form a contract of employment and are not a guarantee by Tampa Palms of the conditions and benefits that are described within them. Nevertheless, the provisions of such Tampa Palms company policies are incorporated into the acknowledgment, and I agree that I shall abide by its provisions.

I also am aware that Tampa Palms, at any time, may on reasonable notice, change, add to, or delete from the provisions of the company policies.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Position

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date