

**AN EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK
DRAFT**

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF HANDBOOK

I have received the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ's Employee Handbook. I understand that this Employee Handbook supersedes any previously published policies.

I have entered into my employment relationship voluntarily and acknowledge that there is no specified length of employment. Accordingly, either the Conference or I may terminate the relationship at any time for any reason or no reason provided no state or federal laws are violated.

I acknowledge that this Employee Handbook or any other document that I have received from the Conference at any time is not a contract of employment and is not a legal document and that the Conference can change any portion of this Handbook without appropriate notice to employees.

I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this Handbook and any revisions made to it.

Employee's Signature

Date

Employee's Name (Typed or printed)

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Date

The Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ

INTRODUCTION TO THE 2003 EDITION OF THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

This Handbook is a manual, a convenient reference book covering the current personnel policies of the Conference. It is guided by personnel practices evolving through the experience of the Conference staff, the Conference Coordinating Council, and the Personnel Committee of the Conference.

We believe that God has given every person special gifts with the intent that those gifts be used to the glory of God and the up building of the ministry of the Church of Jesus Christ. We value both individual gifts and life in community, and therefore are concerned to find the right balance in our work together as a Conference Staff.

The Employee Handbook is not a mission statement, not an orientation program, and not a theology of discipleship for the ordained and lay workers of a Christian community. The Handbook is not a contract as stated in the Employment At-Will paragraph of Section 1. It is neither a theological document nor a contractual one.

As a reference book, the Personnel Committee intends the Handbook to be a useful, practical everyday guidebook for the working relationships of the Conference staff.

The Personnel Committee is appointed by the Coordinating Council to recommend policies and evaluate procedures. The Committee endeavors to provide coordination of personnel practices, policies, and when applicable, benefits. They also provide recommendations with regard to staffing issues and organizational structure. The committee consists of at least one member of the Coordinating Council and additional persons with expertise and sensitivity in personnel matters. The Personnel Committee elects a chairperson. The Conference Minister(s) and the Business Manager are ex-officio members.

The Business Manager will be the Personnel Officer responsible for the administration of day-to-day personnel practices and policies.

We hope that this manual aids you in your vocation of service. We hope it helps provide a structure in which you are welcomed and energized as a community of committed and talented persons serving the Conference. It is an introduction to the advantages of employment with the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ and its current employment policies. It honors the spirit of the Manual on Ministry of the U.C.C., the By-Laws of the Conference and policies of the Coordinating Council. We believe it is consistent with the laws of Maine and the federal government, and supersedes all earlier statements of employment policies.

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SECTION 1 - EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

Equal Employment Opportunity Principles

The Conference provides equal employment opportunities, compensations, references and does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices on the basis of race, color, religion (except insofar as ordination or religious background may be a qualification for a position), sex, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, military status or any other class or status protected by law. If an employee requires a reasonable accommodation for a disability, a request for the accommodation must be made in writing to the Business Manager.

Affirmative Action

The Conference is committed to its own Affirmative Action in the hiring of our employees. Many groups have in the past often been overlooked or discounted and, therefore, special initiative must be taken to remedy discrimination and develop representative participation of persons in protected or otherwise ignored groups (the categories are not mutually exclusive). Such groups include African Americans, American Indians/Alaska natives, persons of Hispanic/Latino/a descent, Asian/Pacific Islanders, women, persons with disabilities, age groups, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, questioning, intersexual people. The Conference is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against any applicant or employee on the basis of race, ethnic background, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation or physical or mental challenge.

Implementation of the Affirmative Action

We will prayerfully seek to employ a person who brings the needed God-given gifts, passions and skills to the Conference. In implementing this policy, we will affirm that a person's status as a member of the above groups may be a positive resource for us. We will examine and confront our own and one another's deeply rooted prejudices as they arise. We will examine the job descriptions to identify overt or covert implications of discrimination. We will develop application and interview procedures and materials that assure openness to diversity. We will work with the Coordinating Council and Commission for Witness Life to establish support systems and educational opportunities throughout the Conference on issues of diversity.

Any employees with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of the Personnel officer or a Conference Minister. Employees may raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in any type of unlawful discrimination including retaliation or reprisal will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employment at Will

This Handbook is not a contract. Nothing in this Handbook is intended to create or constitute an express or implied contract of employment between the Conference and its present or future employees. The provisions of this Handbook do not contain all policies of the Conference and policies/benefits may be revoked or modified at any time by the Conference Coordinating Council in its absolute discretion without prior notice to employees. The Conference will not recognize or be bound by any contract of employment with any employee, potential employee or group of employees unless such a specific/individual contract is prepared in writing and is signed by both an officer of the Conference and the employee(s).

The Conference will not recognize or be bound by any contract of employment with any employee, potential employee or group of employees unless such a specific/individual contract is prepared in writing and is signed by both an officer of the Conference and the employee(s).

Any individual's employment with the Conference is at will and can be terminated by either the employee or the Conference at any time, for any reason or no reason provided no state or federal laws are violated.

Selection of Employees

Conference Ministers and Associate Ministers will be called by the Conference upon recommendation of the Coordinating Council in accordance with the Conference By-laws.

Program Directors (such as Outdoor Ministries and Local Church Resources) and other senior management (such as Business Manager) will be selected by the Coordinating Council upon the recommendation of an appointed search committee.

All other employees will be selected by that position's supervisor.

No employee will be in a direct reporting relationship with an immediate family member. Variances to this policy may be granted, on recommendation of the Personnel committee, and by the vote of the Coordinating Council.

Categories of Employment

Regular Employee status defines an individual who works a pre-determined schedule and is paid through the Maine Conference payroll. Individuals who are independent contractors, free lancers, vendors or are paid by employment agencies are not employees of the Conference.

Full-time status defines an employee who is scheduled to work thirty-five (35) or more hours per week throughout the year.

Part Time status defines an employee who is scheduled to work less than thirty-five (35) per week throughout the year. A minimum weekly work schedule of twenty (20) will be required to be eligible for Conference Benefits.

Temporary/Occasional status defines employees employed either for an unspecified number of hours, or who work on call, or a limited period of time not to exceed one year. Benefits and parameters may vary with each position.

Outdoor Ministries Staff status defines seasonal staff employed at Pilgrim Lodge. This class of employee is not subject to Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) with regard to wage and overtime because of the recreational nature of their employment.

Independent Consultants (Contractors) status defines persons engaged to perform distinct functions on an independent basis. Contractors are not employees; therefore, they do not receive benefits. This handbook and personnel policies do not apply to independent contractors, except where specifically indicated.

Our organizational structure may include all or some of the following classifications for which benefits and policies may vary:

- Ordained staff,

- Program staff,
- Management, and
- Administrative support staff.

The Federal and State Wage and Hour Laws define exempt and non-exempt status. All positions will be categorized in accordance with federal and state guidelines to determine which positions are exempt or non-exempt from overtime payment.

Attendance / Reporting Absences

If you are ill, you must personally call your supervisor by the start of the workday and inform us how long you expect to be out.

If you need to be away from work for any other reason, we expect you to give sufficient notice for us to plan for your absence. Failure to report to work without notice will be viewed as a violation of policy.

Your supervisor will review your attendance periodically and will address unexcused absences and tardiness.

Inclement Weather

The Conference office will usually remain open for work despite inclement weather, so you should count on reporting to work. We understand that bad weather conditions make commuting extremely difficult and we advise you to use your best judgment to ensure your safety.

If you do not report to work or you opt to leave early because of the weather, hourly staff will be paid only for those hours worked. In such a case, you may use your personal days or vacation time so as not to lose pay, or if the opportunity arises, you can make up the time within the same workweek. If the Business Manager closes the office while you are at work, you will be paid for time not worked.

Deployment

The Conference reserves the right to deploy and re-deploy staff to serve the ministries of the Conference.

SECTION 2 - STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS

The Conference is committed to a collegial work environment in which all individuals, clergy and laity alike, are treated with mutual respect and personal dignity. Each employee has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that supports the completion of job assignments, that promotes equal opportunities, and that prohibits discriminatory practices, including harassment in all forms. Discriminatory practices, whether verbal, physical, environmental, real or threatened, and whether in the workplace or during any offsite work situation or function, are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

The Conference requires that you observe all established policies and guidelines, that you adhere to your work schedule and perform your work in a conscientious manner, and that you relate to co-workers and all with whom you have contact with the highest degree of courtesy and respect. All infractions of standards and ethical conduct will be investigated and

appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination is within the discretion of management.

Confidentiality

Much of the information that is handled on a day-to-day basis at the Conference must be treated as confidential. Any information which if disclosed without authorization could be detrimental to the operation and reputation of the Conference, its agents and members, or that which may infringe on anyone's right to privacy should be handled with the utmost discretion and confidentiality. Such information should be shared only on a "need-to-know" basis. Violations will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Computer Communication Systems

The Conference provides its employees with access to various computer communication systems (including computer hardware & software, e-mail systems, electronic communication systems and the internet) to assist employees with carrying on the business of the Conference. Each employee who requires the use of these systems to perform her or his work is authorized the use the systems (for that work and for occasional, personal purposes) on the condition that the employee accepts the limitations and conditions under which access is provided.

Employees are directed to **Addendum #1** of this Handbook, for a more detailed presentation of the policy relating to Computer Communication Systems. Specifically, you will find information on inappropriate use of the systems, monitoring of systems activity, potential disclosure of outside (Internet) communications, access to information, congestion of the systems, and applicability of the policy to all communication systems.

Resolving Employee Grievances, Problems and Complaints

It is our objective to encourage the prompt resolution of employee problems and concerns. All parties are expected to treat the issues and information as confidential to the extent possible and be accountable for their own actions and behavior.

Employees are encouraged to use the grievance procedure (outlined below) and will not be penalized for doing so. The management of the Conference is responsible for ensuring that each grievance is fully processed until the employee is satisfied with the decision or until the employee's right of appeal is exhausted. Employees are encouraged to address complaints as defined below with their supervisor.

Information concerning an employee grievance will be received in strict confidence. Supervisors and other members of the staff will discuss a grievance only with those individuals who are involved in the processing of the grievance.

A grievance is defined as an employee's expressed feeling of dissatisfaction concerning conditions of employment or treatment by supervisors or other employees. Examples of actions, which may be causes of grievances, include, but are not limited to the following:

- Application of Conference's policies, practices, and procedures that are believed to be unfair
- Treatment considered unfair by an employee, such as coercion, reprisal, harassment or intimidation
- Alleged improper or unfair administration of employee benefits or conditions of employment such as vacations, fringe benefits, promotions, retirement, and employee performance evaluation or salary administration.

In order to resolve problems or complaints:

First, you should make an effort to assess objectively the situation, consider possible solutions, and, whenever the problem involves a conflict with a co-worker, make every effort to resolve the matter calmly in a genuine and respectful manner.

Second, you should discuss the problem/issue privately with your immediate supervisor. Your supervisor will endeavor to follow through, help resolve the matter, and document the discussion and efforts to resolve the matter.

Third, if this discussion fails to resolve the problem, or you feel uncomfortable talking with your supervisor, a more formal process begins:

1. Timely, clearly, and succinctly described oral and written complaints by employees will be submitted to and received by their supervisor(s). The supervisor(s) will document all efforts to resolve the complaint.
2. If the supervisor(s) does not resolve the complaint to the satisfaction of the employee, the employee may put the complaint in writing and submit it directly to the Business Manager.
3. If the Business Manager cannot resolve the complaint within twenty (20) working days, the employee has the right to submit the complaint in writing directly to the designated Conference Minister.
4. If the Conference Minister can not resolve an employee's complaint to the satisfaction of the employee within forty-five (45) working days, the employee may submit the complaint to the Personnel Committee of the Maine Conference through the chairperson of that committee.
5. A final decision about the complaint will be given by the Personnel Committee within forty-five (45) days of receipt of the complaint.
6. Employees are advised that they may also have access to state and federal regulative bodies (e.g. Maine Human Rights Commission) for additional resolution of the complaint.

Harassment

This organization has a fundamental commitment to treat each individual with dignity and respect. Harassment of an employee by a supervisor or co-worker on the basis of sex, race, color, religion/creed, national origin, age, disability, marital status or sexual orientation may be prohibited by federal and state law and will not be tolerated by the Conference. It is the policy of the Conference to maintain a working environment free from harassment, insults or intimidation. Verbal or physical conduct, by a supervisor or co-worker relating to your sex, race, color, religion/creed, national origin, age, disability, citizenship, marital status or sexual orientation which has the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment, unreasonably interfering with your work performance or adversely affecting your employment opportunities, is prohibited and will not be tolerated.

The Maine Conference wants to stress its strong opposition to sexual harassment .

The policy of the Maine Conference is that all personnel will work in an environment free from sexual harassment. As such, all members of the Conference are expected to treat each other with the dignity and respect.

Collectively, we will strive to create an environment where sexual harassment has no place. Sexual harassment by an employee of the Maine Conference, United Church of Christ, will not

be tolerated. The Maine Conference, United Church of Christ will actively investigate any complaint of sexual harassment and take appropriate disciplinary action as necessary which may include discharge or suspension of the offending employee.

All supervisory staff, as a job requirement, will be responsible for preventing and eliminating sexual harassment in their respective departments or work areas.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or
3. Such conduct has the purpose and effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Everyone in the Conference has a responsibility to make sure the workplace is free from all forms of harassment. Any person who believes that he or she is being sexually harassed or observes any form of sexual harassment by anyone on any of the Maine Conference, United Church of Christ premises or by an employee of the Maine Conference, United Church of Christ should promptly take the following steps:

If you are Harassed:

Consider using an informal method of resolution if the behavior was minor. Only use this method if you feel it will permanently stop the offensive behavior without reprisal, you feel comfortable talking to the offending person about their behavior, and you feel the offender should be given a chance to change.

Whenever possible, you should politely, but firmly confront whoever is doing the harassing. State how you feel about his or her actions and request that he or she cease harassing you immediately.

Consider formal channels if the incident or behavior is serious, absolutely unacceptable, or repeated (especially after telling the offender to stop). If you do not feel comfortable confronting the harassing individual, you should contact your supervisor, the Business Manager, or either Conference Minister.

Your complaint will be handled with diligence and sensitivity and will be kept confidential to the greatest extent possible. You will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation.

If you are not satisfied with the progress of the investigation or the outcome, you may appeal to the Personnel Committee for resolution. Final appeal beyond the Personnel Committee can be made to the Coordinating Council after the Personnel Committee review.

If you are a Co-Worker:

If co-worker approaches you who feels he or she was discriminated against or sexually harassed, or you observe someone harassing someone else, take action.

All complaints of harassment will be promptly and carefully investigated, and all employees are assured that they will be free from any and all reprisals or retaliation from filing a complaint.

After the investigation is completed, the findings will be reviewed with complainant. If the investigation reveals that the complaint to be valid, immediate and appropriate corrective action will be taken to stop the harassment and prevent its recurrence. If the validity of the complaint cannot be determined, immediate action will be taken to be assured that all parties are acquainted with this harassment policy.

Disciplinary Procedure

The disciplinary policy of the Conference is one of progressive discipline, whereby a certain discipline is handed down with an attempt to remedy a problem, rather than punish the employee or to assert Conference authority. The disciplinary policy of the Conference does not alter the at-will employment situation and the Conference has the right to follow each progressive step or immediately terminate an employee if the seriousness of the situation so requires. This policy will notify the employee that a specific problem exists, it will outline the steps to be taken to meet the expected standards, and it will clearly define the consequences of an employee's failure to improve. The policy will be applied fairly, uniformly and consistently.

The policy takes into account the following factors: 1) the nature and the severity of the incident(s) leading to the discipline; 2) past employment performance and past discipline; 3) the employee's job duties and status; and 4) the employee's length of employment.

A first minor violation of a policy will be met with an oral warning to the employee, which is then reflected by the supervisor making a note in the employee's personnel file.

A second incident will be met by the supervisor preparing a report of the incident. The report should include a description of the incident and any prior oral warnings that may relate to the event. It should also state the requirements that must be met by the employee in the future to avoid further discipline or discharge; and, it should allow the employee to comment on the incident or future expectations. The supervisor and the employee should sign and date the incident report. The report is then provided to any senior member in the line of supervision to review and comment, after which, the report is placed and retained in the employee's personnel file.

In the event of a serious violation or a third incident occurs that relates to prior admonitions, an investigation should occur and possibly an investigatory suspension, with or without pay of the employee.

An investigation will include an interview of the involved employee and any witnesses. Confidentiality will be maintained during the entire investigation. During the investigation, the employee may request the presence of a co-worker representative but only in a supportive and advisory role to the employee.

Review and Discipline of a Conference Minister

The Procedure for Review and Discipline of a Conference Minister is addressed in a specific policy of the Maine Conference. Employees are directed to **Addendum #2** of this Handbook for a detailed presentation of the policy.

SECTION 3 - COMPENSATION POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Wage and Salary Administration

The Business Manager is responsible for the administration of our wage and salary plan. The Conference endeavors periodically to review our wage scales in an attempt to keep pace with non-profit organizations, the United Church of Christ, and other denominational organizations.

The Conference includes a salary review for employees as part of the annual budget planning. Adjustments in salary may be based on, but not limited to, the following factors: individual performance and commitment, unexcused absences and tardiness, market data for comparable positions, relativity to the wage range, and budget constraints.

In instances in which the staff is required to live in conference-provided housing, compensation will be adjusted to reflect the housing benefit.

Social Security

Social Security/Medicare covers all non-ordained employees and, as required, the Conference processes your deduction and matches the amount to be contributed toward these programs. Under current law, ordained ministers pay self-employment taxes (SECA). The Conference provides an allowance to eligible ordained staff to offset the difference between the withholding rate for lay employees and the rate paid by self-employed persons. This allowance is taxable income to the employee.

Unemployment Compensation

The Maine Conference is exempt from the unemployment law. You are therefore not eligible for unemployment compensation when you leave the Conference's employment.

Adoption Allowance

Part of the compensation of staff may be designated and administrated by the Conference as adoption allowance, in accordance with the IRS guidelines.

Housing Allowance

Part of the compensation of eligible ordained staff is designated as housing allowance, in accordance with the IRS guidelines.

Travel Allowance and Reimbursable Business Expenses

All employees who are required to use their personal vehicle in the course of Conference business will be reimbursed for authorized automobile travel and other business-related expenses within the guidelines specified by the IRS and the Conference. Employees are directed to Addendum #4 of this Handbook for a detailed presentation of the policy.

Conference Owned Vehicles

Conference owned vehicles will only be used in the course of Conference business.

Honoraria and Other Sources of Income

Full-time exempt staff may not accept honoraria for their work from the churches of the Maine Conference.

We recognize that full time exempt staff may have opportunities to serve as adjunct faculty or guest lecturers at theological seminaries and divinity schools for which compensation may be given. We encourage you to discuss any potential outside employment with immediate supervisor before making a commitment.

Pay Cycle and Time Cards

The workweek is defined as the period starting 12:00 a.m. Sunday morning through Saturday 11:59 p.m. and payroll is processed on a bi-weekly schedule, effective January 1, 2003.

All non-exempt employees are required to provide an accurate and signed time card for their supervisor's approval. Time cards must reflect starting and ending time and time out/return from lunch. Your card must be received by the Finance Office prior to Monday 9:00 a.m. in order for us to process your paycheck properly.

Exempt personnel are required to report and document absences (personal/vacation/sick time) with the Business Manager on a weekly basis for recording purposes.

Paychecks will be distributed directly to you every other Wednesday unless your compensation is outside of the payroll system. Paychecks cannot be released to a friend or family member without your prior written approval. We strongly encourage you to use the convenience of direct deposit for your paycheck. Your pay can be deposited into an account of your choice and available to you on payday.

Overtime

In accordance with the Federal and State Wage And Hour Laws, non-exempt employees will be paid overtime at 1 and 1/2 times the normal rate for time worked over 40 hours each week. If you are a non-exempt employee, any time worked between 35 hours and 40 hours for a one-week period will be compensated at your regular rate of pay.

Your supervisor must approve all overtime in advance.

If you are absent from work because of job-related injury, jury duty, illness, vacation, or personal day, this paid time will not be counted as hours worked for the purpose of computing eligibility for overtime pay. Holiday hours will be considered hours worked in the calculation of overtime.

Non-Exempt Staff - From time to time you may be asked to work evenings or weekends for a special project or event. Whenever this occurs, we retain the right to adjust your work schedule in that same week. If you are required to work more than 40 hours, you will be compensated at overtime rates. In accordance with federal and state regulations, compensatory time off is not an option for non-exempt employees, if the workweek exceeds 40 hours.

Exempt staff is not eligible for overtime pay. It is presumed that you will manage your own time appropriately while keeping the best interest of the Conference in mind.

SECTION 4 - HEALTH AND SECURITY BENEFITS

Eligibility Criteria

Eligible employees may enroll for health benefits on your first day of work. You are required either to enroll for the plans you choose or sign a waiver indicating that you decline the plans

offered to you. If you do not enroll for health benefits within your first 90 days of employment, you may apply at a later date but will be subject to evidence of insurability and eligibility. For dental coverage, if you do not enroll in the first 90 days, you will not be eligible again until an open enrollment period, if any is offered.

The Conference offers the following benefits to all eligible employees:

- UCC health insurance
- UCC dental insurance
- UCC group life insurance
- UCC long term disability and life insurance
- UCC retirement annuity

Outlines of the plans available to you are fully described in the booklets that you will receive during your orientation.

Cost

The Conference pays all premium costs for health, dental, group life, and long-term disability and life insurance for all full-time employees, and dependents, if any. The Conference reserves the right to change the level of employee contribution upon giving prior notice to applicable employees.

Annuity Fund

If you are a full-time employee you are eligible to participate in the Annuity Fund offered by the Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ. The Conference makes quarterly contributions on your behalf at the percentage of salary stated in your letter of employment. You have the option to make additional pre-tax contributions on your own initiative. The Business Manager can assist you if you choose this option.

Workers' Compensation Insurance

You are also covered under the Maine Worker's Compensation act for any work-related injuries and/or illnesses. Worker's Compensation will be the primary insurance for such work related conditions and will include both medical and disability costs. You are required, however, to report such injury immediately to your supervisor, seek medical attention, and submit a report to your supervisor within 48 hours of the onset of the incident.

Continuity of Your Insurance Benefits (COBRA)

You may be eligible to continue certain insurance benefits at your own expense upon separation of employment from the Conference. If you have dependent coverage, your dependents may be eligible for continuation of insurance benefits in the event of legal separation, divorce, or if your dependent children reach the plan age limit. Notice of such a change in status must be given to the Pension Boards, which administers our health benefits program, within 60 days of the occurring event or you and/or your dependents will be ineligible for the benefit continuation option. For additional details about your rights under COBRA, please contact the Business Manager or the Pension Boards.

SECTION 5 - TIME AWAY FROM WORK

Vacation

The Conference will provide vacation with full pay and benefits for all eligible employees.

Unless otherwise specified in a more restrictive contract, vacation received per calendar year will be:

<u>Period of Time Exempt</u>		<u>Non-Exempt</u>
Years 1 – 10	4 weeks	22 days
Years 11 – 25	5 weeks	27 days
After Year 25	1-Time 3 week bonus	1-Time 15 day bonus

During the first year of employment employees will receive a pro-rated number of weeks of vacation.

Other policies regarding vacation include:

- Vacation time is not cumulative from year to year.
- Pay in lieu of vacation time will be allowed only in those instances when an employee is terminated or resigns with due notice, except in a case of gross misconduct.
- Vacation time can be taken at the discretion of the employee after approval of his/her supervisor.
- Holidays falling within vacation will not be counted as vacation days.
- Employees who leave our employment may be paid for unused vacation time.

Paid Holidays

The Conference observes the following 13 holidays for full-time employees:

New Year's Day	Columbus Day
Martin Luther King Day	Veterans Day
Presidents' Day	Thanksgiving Day
Good Friday	Thanksgiving Day After
Memorial Day	Christmas Eve Day
Independence Day	Christmas Day
Labor Day	

Any holiday which falls on a Saturday or a Sunday, will be observed on the following Monday. The Conference reserves the right to change the holiday schedule at any time to accommodate the needs of the Conference.

Part Time Employees - When a holiday falls within a regularly scheduled workweek for an eligible non-exempt part time employee the holiday pay will be prorated according to the percentage of hours worked versus fulltime.

Sick Time/Personal Time and Short Term Disability

Full-time employees will accrue sick/personal time as follows:

<u>Type of Time</u>	<u># Days per Calendar Year</u>	<u>Cumulative into future years</u>
Personal Days	5 days	No
Sick Days	12 (accumulated 1 day/month)	Yes

Other policies regarding Sick/Personal Time include:

- If you do not use your time, you may bank any unused sick time up to a maximum of 100 workdays for use only in the event of a short-term disability or a pregnancy.
- Employees, who leave Conference employment, will not be paid for unused sick time/personal time.
- Eligible part-time non-exempt employees will have sick/personal time prorated according to the percentage of hours worked versus fulltime.
- Should you become disabled in excess of five (5) days and need to utilize your banked time, you should submit your written request as soon as possible to your supervisor along with a medical verification of your disability with an indication of your anticipated "return-to-work" date. Please see your supervisor for details if you anticipate a need to request a medical leave of absence.

Leave of Absence

Unpaid leave will be granted only after you have made use of accrued sick/personal time and vacation time.

After you have used all accrued sick time, personal time and vacation time, you will be responsible for the cost to maintain your health insurance benefits.

Prior to your return from an extended leave of absence, you should communicate with your immediate supervisor or the Conference Minister to discuss your anticipated date of return and any restrictions you may have or accommodations required. Whenever possible you will be reinstated to the same or a similar position at a similar rate of pay. If this is not possible because of changing conditions at the Conference, reinstatement may be deferred or declined.

Parental Leave

Male or female employees may be granted an unpaid child care leave of absence for up to six weeks for the purpose of caring for a newborn or seriously ill child. Employees adopting a child may be granted a child care leave for the purpose of receiving the child into their immediate family.

Military Leave

The Conference will reimburse the difference between military compensation and your regular pay for military reserve duty for a period of two weeks per year.

In the event of an emergency specified by a governmental agency requiring an employee to report for active duty, remuneration for such time will be at the discretion of the Conference.

If you are called into active service in the Armed Forces of the United States, your time away will be counted in determining your length of service. You may also utilize and be compensated for any accrued vacation or sick time as defined earlier in this Section.

When you return from military duty, you will be reinstated to your former position, or a similar position, status and pay provided that:

- You have completed your military service satisfactorily.
- Your tour of duty did not extend beyond four years.
- You are still qualified to perform the duties of your job.
- You apply for reinstatement within 90 days after your release, or within the time limits prescribed by law if you were hospitalized because of a military disability, and,

- Circumstances of the Conference have not changed as to make reinstatement impossible or unreasonable.

The Conference complies with state and federal laws regarding military leave.

Jury Duty

If you are summoned for Jury Duty or as a witness for a trial, the Conference will pay your regular pay less any stipend you receive from the court.

If you're called to serve, you must give a copy of the written notification to your Supervisor within 48 hours of receipt of the summons. This will allow us to plan for your absence.

In order to receive your regular pay, you must present a court-issued statement of jury service to your supervisor.

Whenever you are not required to serve during regular office hours, you will be expected to return to work.

Your position with the Conference will not be jeopardized by serving for Jury Duty.

Pilgrim Lodge

Full-time staff will be eligible to serve at Pilgrim Lodge for a period of one week per year, as part of your work assignment, subject to approval by your supervisor. If you are interested, we encourage you to submit your request to your supervisor at least two months in advance of the specific week or camp at which you plan to serve.

Paid Sabbatical

The Conference recognizes the value of allowing Conference Ministers, Business Manager, Director of Outdoor Ministries, Director of Local Church Resources and other program staff, as agreed to by the Personnel Committee, to take a sabbatical leave from time to time in order to study and refresh their vocations.

In considering your request for a sabbatical, the Conference may consider the following:

- After five (5) years of continuous full-time service, ordained and program staff may be eligible for up to three (3) months paid sabbatical.
- Sabbaticals will not exceed three (3) months regardless of the number of years of service.
- Paid sabbaticals assume a return to duty for at least one (1) year.
- Eligible employees may apply for a second sabbatical after ten (10) years of continuous service.
- Requests for sabbaticals must be made in writing and discussed with the Conference Minister. The Coordinating Council will approve the sabbatical leave of Conference Ministers.
- The Conference Minister reserves the right to delay the start of, reschedule, or deny a sabbatical in the best interest of the Conference. This may occur, for example, in the instance of requests that would be concurrent, if granted.
- Payment will not be made in lieu of sabbatical or at time of termination.

Educational assistance is listed in Section 6, General Information.

SECTION 6 - GENERAL INFORMATION

Personnel Files

A Personnel File is maintained for every employee containing such information as is necessary to make any and all employment-related decisions, including payroll, insurance, promotion, transfer, training and development purposes, as well as documents required by law (such as the I-9 Immigration Form.) It is the responsibility of the employee to update the Conference regarding changes in circumstances including change of address, telephone numbers, emergency notifications, educational accomplishments, etc. Your file may include, but not be limited to, the following items:

- Employment Application, Ministerial Profile, or Resume submitted at time of application
- Letter of Employment, including a job description that will be updated as necessary.
- Executed Acknowledgment of Receipt of Employee Handbook
- Executed At-Will Statement
- Executed Confidentiality Agreement
- I-9 Form
- Correspondence related to employment
- Disciplinary Documentation, if any
- Completed Performance Appraisal(s)
- Vacation and Sick Leave Status Reports
- Flex-time Work Schedule Agreements
- Loan Agreements, if any
- Wage History
- Notes from your exit interview at the conclusion of your employment with the Conference
- Designation of Beneficiaries

Your personnel file is available from the Business Manager (with prior approval) for your review any time during normal business hours. The only other persons who may see your files are the people above you in the line of supervision. The Conference will not release any personal information to anyone outside the line of supervision without your permission, except as required by law. In emergency situations in which you or a person you designated must be contacted, the Business Manager of the Conference Minister(s) may release to other employees your name, address, home telephone number, and the name of the person to contact in case of emergency.

If any personal data changes, please notify the Business Manager. Personnel files are the property of the Conference and the Conference will provide access to personnel files in accordance with applicable law.

Health, Safety and Security

We are concerned with the health and safety of all our employees. We ask you to be safety conscious, to observe all established safety guidelines, and report any safety hazards to your supervisor or the business office.

Smoking Policy

In order to comply with the laws of the State of Maine and to maintain a healthy, safe and comfortable working environment for all employees, smoking within all buildings of the Conference is strictly prohibited. Smoking within 20 feet of the entrance of all buildings is also prohibited. Employees smoking in any nonsmoking area may be subject to disciplinary action.

Employees who wish to smoke are permitted to leave the building for a smoking break as needed and within reason. Employees are encourage to talk to their supervisor or the Business Manager to workout a schedule which will not interfere with their workday.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) Policy

The Conference does not unlawfully discriminate against employees or applicants living with or affected by HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) or AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). The Conference recognizes that HIV infections and AIDS, the most serious stage of disease progression resulting from HIV infection, pose significant and delicate issues for the workplace. Accordingly, we have established the guidelines and principles to serve as the basis for handling employee situations and concerns related to HIV infection and AIDS.

Employees are directed to **Addendum #3** of this Handbook for a more detailed presentation of the Conference policy relating to Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

Drug and alcohol use by an employee may have very serious ramifications on an employee's abilities to perform his or her job. Employee substance abuse problems can result in workplace injuries, possession of illegal drugs on Conference premises and properties, and liability to third parties. The Conference has a no-tolerance drug and alcohol use policy, which covers possession and use during employment hours. In the absence of a written authorization from a physician, all employees are prohibited from possessing, consuming or being under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or other controlled substances during employment hours. The Conference will exercise its right to inspect the property or person of an employee for alcohol upon reasonable suspicion.

Training, Professional Development and Continuing Education

The Conference values the professional development of its employees within the context of the Conference's mission and goals. From time to time the Conference may recommend and pay for you to obtain training, such as seminars or classes, related to your position with the Conference. Payment for these seminars or classes is considered training and not educational assistance. The Conference may, in its discretion, consider requests for tuition reimbursement from eligible employees in accordance with the constraints of the Conference's budget, best interests, and the following criteria:

- The seminar or course must be directly job-related.
- The seminar or course must be approved by your supervisor.
- You must be a full-time employee in good standing with a minimum of one year's continuous service with the Conference.
- You must submit a written request along with pertinent course information.
- In order to receive reimbursement for educational assistance you must receive a passing grade for the specified course.

All training requires the approval of your supervisor who will determine the appropriateness of the training program and if educational assistance will be available.

SECTION 7 - LEAVING OUR EMPLOYMENT

Resignation

While we hope both you and the Conference will mutually benefit from your work for the Conference, we realize that at some point you may decide to leave your job with the Conference. If you are a non-exempt employee and anticipate resigning your position with the Conference, you are requested to notify your supervisor and the Business Manager at least two (2) weeks in advance of the date that you plan to leave. Exempt personnel are requested to provide at least four (4) weeks notice. Conference Ministers and other called employees will provide notice of resignation as stated in their respective letters of call.

All employees who voluntarily terminate and provide the above notice will be paid for any accrued vacation benefit.

Involuntary Separation

Employment with the Conference is at will and subject to resignation or termination, respectively by either you or the Conference, at any time, with or without cause provided no state or federal laws are violated. Terminated employees will be paid for accrued vacation benefits.

Reduction of Work Force

In the event of a reduction of work force or an elimination of a position, we will make every effort to provide advance notice to employees affected and, whenever possible, assistance in their job search.

Full-time, non-exempt employees will be paid for any unused vacation accrued at separation. If you have given less than five years service, you will also receive one month's severance pay. If you have given more than five years service, you will also receive two months' severance pay.

Full-time, exempt employees with less than five years employment will be paid a maximum severance of two months pay which will include accrued and unused vacation.

Full-time, exempt employees with more than five years employment will be paid severance up to a maximum of four months pay including accrued and unused vacation.

Termination

In the event it is determined that you are not suited for a position, as a result of lack of competency, performance, behavior, or attendance, if deemed appropriate by the Conference, we will endeavor to provide you an opportunity to improve or to seek another position.

Serious misconduct including, but not limited to, theft, harassment, violence, insubordination or unethical behavior may result in immediate termination with no prior notice. Employees who are terminated for such causes are not eligible for severance pay but will be paid for any accrued vacation.

Death

In the event of death of any employee who has been employed for five (5) years or more, the surviving spouse or partner or, if there is no spouse or partner, the dependents of the employee

will receive, share and share alike, apart from any other benefit, a gift equal to three (3) months' wages.

For an employee who has been employed less than five years, the gift will be pro-rated, but no less than one (1) months' wages.

A dependent is anyone who has been designated in writing by the employee on the appropriate form.

Retirement

Once you know when you have planned an intended date of retirement, please submit your notice in writing to the Business Manager at least three months before your date of retirement. This will provide the Conference an opportunity to review with you any benefits or insurance options that may apply. Retirement benefits are subject to the rules, policies and provisions of the Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ, and the laws pertaining to Social Security and ERISA, as may be appropriate.

Exit Interview

At the time of your separation of employment, regardless of the reason, we will request an exit interview. This interview with the Conference Minister or designee may include a member of the Personnel Committee and is intended to provide you with information about your benefits and arrangements after termination, as well as an opportunity to discuss any recommendations you may have and generally to provide a sense of closure.

CONCLUSION OF THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

We intend for the Handbook to be a reference book. Please include with your copy all personnel-related memoranda from the Conference Minister, Business Manager, and the Personnel Committee of the Coordinating Council of the Conference that update and redefine elements of the Handbook. These memoranda should help inform you of current policy and address issues that evolve in the life of the Conference and its staff.

ADDENDUM #1 – Computer Communication Systems (Note: Earlier reference in the Personnel Handbook, Section 2 – Standards of Conduct and Ethics)

Inappropriate Use.

No person is authorized to use the Systems or to allow others to use the Systems to encourage, allow, or engage in any illegal or inappropriate activity, including, but not limited to, accessing, creating, transmitting, retrieving, or storing obscene, offensive, harassing, discriminatory, or defamatory materials. Spreading computer viruses, infringing copyright materials, or disclosing trade secrets or proprietary information, with the sole exception that a person may, with specific authorization from two Supervisors in the Conference, gain access to, create, transmit, retrieve or store information that would otherwise violate this Policy, if the action is taken exclusively for the purpose the lawful and ethical representation of a customer of the Conference. The Conference cannot ensure that the Systems will, at all times, be free or illegal and inappropriate activity. Supervisors, members, and employees should inform the Conference in the event that they obtain knowledge that the Systems have been, or are being, used for illegal or inappropriate activity, and should take reasonable steps to prevent the further unauthorized use of the Systems.

Monitoring of Systems Activity

In the course of administering, operating, and repairing the System, the Conference routinely obtains information about usage patterns and otherwise examines the Systems to ensure system integrity and compliance with this Policy. This review and examination of information is a necessary incident to providing access to the System, and to the protection of the right and property of the Conference. Notwithstanding this practice of routine, administrative observation of activity, with respect to internal communications and communications received by the Systems from external sources, the Conference will act reasonably and lawfully to protect privileged and confidential information from disclosure to persons other than the employees of the Conference, and individuals acting under their authority.

Potential Disclosure of Outside (Internet) Communications

Communications transmitted to or from the Conference's Systems by means of interconnections with other computer and communications systems may be intercepted, reviewed, and divulged by persons not affiliated with or under the control of the Conference. The communications that may be so disclosed without the Conference's knowledge or permission include (without limitation) e-mail messages sent to or transmitted from addresses outside the Conference, and any http, ftp, or telnet transmissions over the Internet (including, for example, the http transmissions sent automatically by browser software when a hypertext link is selected on a page served from a remote location on the world-wide web, or when the "URL" address for such a page is typed and transmitted through such browser software). All persons using the Systems must do so with awareness of the potential for such uncontrollable disclosures to occur and may employ password protection or other encryption devices to protect confidential information transmitted by these means.

Access to Information

No person may attempt to hide his or her identity when using the System. If passwords or other devices are used to encrypt or restrict access to materials created, transmitted, retrieved or stored in the Systems, all passwords and other devices necessary for the Conference to have access to such materials must be provided to the Conference on request, with the

understanding that the Conference will only use such passwords in a manner consistent with its obligations and the obligations of its attorneys to maintain the confidentiality of Conference information.

Congestion

The Systems may not knowingly be used in a manner that could congest the Systems or impair the ability of others to access the Systems, and any person using the Systems in that manner must discontinue such use immediately upon request by the Conference.

Applicability

This policy applies to any Systems accessed from the Conference several premises and properties, any Systems owned by the Conference (including portable computers that may be removed from the premises and properties with the Conference's permission and used at other locations), and any Systems accessed through Company-paid accounts. This policy applies when accessing any Systems where a person is identified as a supervisor, member, employee of, or a professional practicing with the Conference. It applies to any and all portions of the Systems, regardless of whether said portions are owned, managed, or operated by the Conference or by a third party of behalf of the Conference.

ADDENDUM #2 - Review and Discipline of a Conference Minister (Note: Earlier reference in the Personnel Handbook, Section 2 -- Standards of Conduct and Ethics)

This Policy on Review and Discipline of a Conference Minister is based upon recommendations from the Council of Conference Ministers, the Parish Life & Leadership Ministry, and the Office of the General Ministries of the United Church of Christ. The Policy presents the process for the review and discipline of a conference minister in relation to his or her ordained ministerial standing only, and does not relate to performance review.

Parity among UCC Ministers

We affirm that there is to be parity of treatment among all UCC ministers, including conference ministers, when allegations affecting ordained ministerial standing are investigated. Therefore, a conference minister in the Maine Conference is subject to the same processes and procedures in place for all UCC ministers in the Maine Conference.

Implications for Personnel Issues

Review of a conference minister's ordained ministerial standing is the responsibility of the committee on the ministry in the association where the Conference Minister maintains his/her standing. Personnel issues (e.g. the continued employment of the Conference Minister) relating to Conference Ministers are the responsibility of the conference, through the Coordinating Council. Care needs to be taken that a committee on the ministry does not deal with personnel matters and that the conference does not deal with ordained ministerial standing.

Investigation and Adjudication

The committee on the ministry where the Conference Minister holds his/her standing is responsible for termination of ordained ministerial standing. If allegations calling the ordained ministerial standing of a Conference Minister into question merit a special review, the committee

on the ministry shall proceed with the review in accordance with the UCC Manual on Ministry and the Association's disciplinary procedures. The UCC Parish Life & Leadership Ministry will, if invited to do so, provide consultation to a committee on the ministry regarding procedural concerns.

Leave of Absence

In the event that a committee on the ministry determines that an allegation requires a disciplinary review, the Conference Minister under review will be placed on a leave of absence without prejudice and with pay until the allegation has been resolved. This will help to assure that there is no actual or perceived conflict of interest as the disciplinary procedures take place.

The Coordinating Council may provide for an acting Conference Minister to carry out the responsibilities of the conference minister during his/her leave of absence. In addition to maintaining the day-to-day ministry of the conference, the acting Conference Minister may provide significant leadership and assistance as the conference responds and adapts to the particular circumstances of the review.

Collegial Support for the Conference Minister

The Council of Conference Ministers will provide one or more colleagues to provide personal and pastoral support for the Conference Minister under review.

Legal Counsel

There must be clarity and boundaries among those representing the legal interests of the Conference and the legal interests of the Conference Minister. The Conference Minister will not participate in any decisions regarding counsel for the Conference. The Conference Minister may retain personal legal counsel at his or her own expense. Legal counsel for the Conference shall not be the same as the legal counsel for the Conference Minister.

Record Keeping

The conference will maintain a record of all actions and decisions of its Coordinating Council, boards and committees related to review and discipline. The association will maintain a record of all actions and decisions of the committee on the ministry and/or the association related to the review and discipline of any of its clergy. The Conference Minister shall not be responsible for maintaining files that affect the Conference Minister.

The Role of the Office of the General Minister and President

The Office of the General Minister and President of the UCC will be asked to coordinate the activity of various parties involved: conference, committee on the ministry, Council of Conference Ministers, Conference Minister under review, acting Conference Minister, the Parish Life & Leadership Ministry, and the Office of the General Minister and President. In that role, the Office of the General Minister and President will:

- monitor the activity of each party to assure roles and responsibilities are carried out and that boundaries of activity are honored;
- maintain contact with the various parties;
- maintain a confidential log of activity;
- facilitate appropriate communication among the parties;
- coordinate communication of the parties with various public bodies (conference constituency, media, etc.) affected by the action or having an appropriate interest; and
- continue to work with the Coordinating Council and the Conference Minister towards the health and wholeness of both the conference and the Minister following adjudication.

Other Conditions

In the event of any conflict between (1) the provisions of the Personnel Policy of the Maine Conference and (2) the provisions of this Addendum, the provisions of this Addendum will control. In the event of any conflict between (1) the provisions of the By-Laws of the Maine Conference and (2) the provisions of this Addendum, the provisions of the By-Laws will control.

ADDENDUM #3 -- Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) Policy (Note: Earlier references in this Handbook, Section 6 -- General Information)

The Conference is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy work environment for all employees. This commitment stands on the recognition that HIV, and therefore AIDS, is not transmitted through any casual contact. HIV is a bloodborne virus and is spread only through intimate contact with blood, semen, vaginal secretions and breast milk. For over 10 years, scientists have made new discoveries about HIV infection and AIDS. But one piece of information has never changed – how the disease spreads. Scientists have recognized this fact since 1982. The basic facts about HIV transmission and prevention are sound.

The Conference will treat HIV infection and AIDS the same as other illnesses in terms of all of our employee policies and benefits, including health and life insurance, disability benefits and leaves of absence. Employees living with or affected by HIV infection and AIDS will be treated with compassion and understanding, as would employees with other disabling conditions.

In accordance with the law, the Conference will provide reasonable accommodations for employees and applicants with disabilities who are qualified to perform the essential functions of their positions. This applies to employees and applicants living with HIV infection and AIDS, and is especially relevant in light of new treatments for HIV infection that may allow people living with AIDS to return to work after periods of disability leave. Generally, disabled employees have the responsibility to request an accommodation. It is the policy of the Conference to respond to the changing health status of employees by making reasonable accommodations. Employees may continue to work as long as they are able to perform their duties safely and in accordance with performance standards. Supervisors and managers are encouraged to contact the Business Manager for assistance in making reasonable accommodations.

Coworker concerns will be handled in an educational fashion. The Conference can provide information and educational materials. Supervisors and managers are encouraged to contact the Business Manager for assistance in providing employees with information and assistance. Recognizing the need for all employees to be accurately informed about HIV infection and AIDS, the Conference will make information and educational materials and seminars available. Employees who want to obtain information and materials should contact the Business Manager.

Coworkers are expected to continue working relationships with any employee who has HIV infection or AIDS. Coworkers who refuse to work with, or who withhold services from, harass, or otherwise discriminate against an employee with HIV infection or AIDS, will be subject to the same disciplinary procedures that apply to other policy violations.

Information about an employee's medical condition is private and must be treated in a confidential manner. In most cases, only supervisors directly involved in providing a reasonable

accommodation or arranging benefits may need to know an employee's diagnosis. Others who may acquire such information, even if obtained personally from the individual, should respect the confidentiality of the medical information. The Conference maintains an "open-door" policy.

Employees living with or affected by HIV infection or AIDS, and those who have any related concerns, are encouraged to contact their supervisor, office administrator, department director, the Business Manager or the Conference Minister(s) to discuss their concerns and obtain information. If you have any questions about this policy, their interpretations, or the information upon which it is based, please contact any of these individuals.

ADDENDUM #4 -- Staff Travel, On The Road, Pastoral And Hospitality Expense Policy (Note: Earlier reference in this Handbook, Section 3 -- Compensation Policies and Practices)

Automobiles and Automobile Expenses:

The Conference will be responsible for the automobile and out of pocket travel expenses of its professional staff in the conduct of their assigned duties. The decision to purchase or lease a vehicle for the professional use of a staff member will be by the approval of the Coordinating Council and based upon the recommendation of the Finance Committee. This recommendation shall be based upon an analysis of the financial benefit to the Conference of its owning/leasing the vehicle as opposed to reimbursing the staff member for the use of a personal vehicle.

The Conference will be reimbursed on a quarterly basis at a minimum for personal use of Conference vehicles at the cost per mile of operating that vehicle. Staff members with a Conference vehicle will submit mileage reports showing business and personal use of said vehicle to the Business Manager at least quarterly. All requests for reimbursement shall be substantiated by receipts and made on the form provided by the Conference. The nature and purpose of out-of-state meetings must be documented. If the Conference is to be reimbursed by another agency, instrumentality or Conference, the report should so state.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

The Business Manager and the Treasurer shall be responsible to the Coordinating Council for monitoring this policy. Monthly reports will be prepared by the Finance Department and submitted to the Moderator, Treasurer and Conference Ministers and Associate Conference Minister.

STAFF RETREATS:

The Conference shall be responsible for the reasonable costs of occasional staff retreats.

OTHER TRAVEL:

The Conference will be responsible for the reasonable costs of attendance and participation of Staff in such national and regional denominational and ecumenical events as the routine performance of their duties and responsibilities requires.

The Conference will not be responsible for the costs of attendance and participation at such events by the spouses of staff members.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REVIEW:

The Finance Committee will review this policy and compliance therewith on a regular basis.

Adopted by Board of Directors on January 6, 1995