



What Is Civil Service?

Why is civil service important? Employees work under the direction of elected officials, but a civil service system seeks to ensure that employment is free from political pressures, and that personnel decisions are based on merit. Seattle established a civil service system in 1896 to uphold the merit principles of transparency, opportunity for advancement, competency, career longevity, due process, and fair treatment of City employees.

Am I covered by civil service? Most regularly appointed employees are covered, with some exceptions:

- ✗ Elected officials, department heads, Executive job titles, and Assistant City Attorneys
- ✗ Temporary employees
- ✗ Seattle Public Library employees
- ✗ Other job titles or positions exempted by ordinance

Ask your [HR Representative](#) or contact us to know your status. Uniformed police and fire personnel are covered by a separate [public safety civil service](#) system.

How does civil service affect my career? The civil service system requires standard processes in the following areas to create a fair employment system:

- ✓ Hiring/Promotion
- ✓ Discipline
- ✓ Separation/Termination
- ✓ Appeals

How are civil service standards and policies applied? City departments follow citywide [Rules](#), laws, and policies on employment processes. When an employee believes that these were not properly applied, they may file a grievance, and [appeal](#) (if needed) to the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to decide their issue, if covered. The CSC is an independent body comprised of three members who decide such matters. Some employees are also covered by [collective bargaining agreements](#), which are outside the jurisdiction of the CSC.

How do I exercise my civil service rights? Employees must follow deadlines and processes to exercise civil service rights:

- ✓ Making a [political patronage complaint](#) of undue pressure in a hiring process.
- ✓ Filing an [appeal](#) of higher-level discipline (suspension, demotion or termination) and/or violations of applicable laws and rules, if eligible.

Where can I find more information?

- ✓ More information about civil service, the CSC, and ways to contact us can be found at <https://www.seattle.gov/civil-service-commission> . You can also contact us at civilservice@seattle.gov or (206)586-1991.
- ✓ Many employment standards and processes that uphold the civil service system are found in the City's [Personnel Rules](#).