

Lanivet Parish Council

Separation of Duties Matrix

Oct-21

Introduction

The concept of **Segregation of Duties** is to separate the major responsibilities of authorising transactions, custody of assets, recording of transactions and reconciliation/verification of transactions for each business process. From a separation of duties perspective, the completion of more than one of these functions would be considered performing "incompatible duties". So, no one employee should have responsibility for completing two or more of these major responsibilities. But, staff limitations may make this impractical ***and that is when compensating controls must be considered.***

The attached matrices have been developed to help you in structuring proper separation of duties and identifying areas where separation of duties is lacking. They will cover the most common processes (Cash, Petty Cash, Investments and Banking, Purchasing, Payroll, Stock, Fixed Assets and General Ledger).

When completing these forms, if you identify employees who perform two or more tasks for each business process area, you will need to determine if those tasks would be considered a performance of "incompatible duties". If so, you will need to consider compensating controls or revise duties.

You should always strive for the optimum degree of segregation of duties. However, due to limited staff sizes at most councils, optimum separation of duties cannot be achieved. In those circumstances you should at least strive for an acceptable (minimal) level of segregation of duties which when combined with compensating controls will minimize the impact of control deficiencies and exposure to errors or irregularities. A minimal level of segregation of duties could possibly be achieved by verifying that no one employee performs more than two of the "incompatible duties". For example, an employee might perform the authorization and verification/reconciliation functions but they should not record the transaction or maintain custody of assets. A compensating control could be managerial review.

Name of Staff and Title	Compensating Controls
N/A	
N/A	
N/A	
N/A	

Petty Cash

- 1) Disburses Petty Cash
- 2) Reconciles Petty Cash
- 3) Replenishes Petty Cash fund
- 4) Posts Petty Cash Activity to General Ledger

Suggestions for Best Practices

Generally one person should be designated as petty cash custodian. This person disburses petty cash and turns in

Petty cash custodian should not have access to post activity to general ledger or replenish petty cash fund.

Petty cash counts should be made on periodic basis by someone independent of petty cash process.

Investments and Treasury

- 1) Initiates request to open bank accounts
- 2) Authorizes opening of new bank accounts
- 3) Adds new account information to General Ledger
- 4) Initiates investment transactions
- 5) Reviews and approves investment transactions
- 6) Posts investment activity to the General Ledger
- 7) Reconciles Investment Accounts to amounts reported on General Ledger
- 8) Maintains investments (ie, stock certificates, cd's, etc)

Name of Staff and Title	Name of Staff and Title	Compensating Controls
Julie Burdon - Parish Clerk		
Parish Council		Council
Julie Burdon - Parish Clerk		
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Julie Burdon - Parish Clerk		

Recommendations for Best Practices

Only full Council should be able to authorize opening of new bank accounts.

Treasury type activities such as opening bank accounts and authorizing signatories should not be performed by employees involved in daily cash activities.

Employee entering investment activity into the General Ledger should not be same person that initiated and authorized the transactions.

Employee responsible for reconciling investment activity should be independent of investment process.

Investments should be maintained by someone who is not directly involved in day to day investment process. This might be an area for senior management, because they are usually not directly involved with day to day processing.

Purchasing

- 1) Initiates Purchase Order
- 2) Prepares Purchase Order
- 3) Approves Purchase Order
- 4) Modifies Master Supplier file
- 5) **Receives goods from Supplier**
- 6) Modifies or Reconciles Inventory Records
- 7) Approves Supplier Invoices for Payment

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	Parish Council	

Suggestions for Best Practices

If Purchase Requisitions are used, they should be reviewed and approved by someone other than employee initiating the requisition.

For most effective separation of duties, employees involved in the purchasing function (initiating requisitions, creating purchase orders, approving purchase orders) should not have payments related responsibilities. These employees should not be able to approve invoices for payment, record invoices, receive goods, maintain inventories, or modify Vendor Master files.

When staff size limits separation of duties, the following compensating controls may help limit the severity of control weaknesses:

Produce reports of purchase orders and subsequent payments from the accounting system and have a supervisory level employee independent of the purchasing function review the reports for accuracy and paying particular attention to payments to new suppliers.

Have person independent of purchasing process check delivery notes and receiving evidence to inventory records.

Payroll

- 1) Responsible for Modifying Employee Master File
- 2) Approves modifications to Employee Master File
- 3) Prepares payroll file for processing
- 4) Approves payroll file
- 5) Generates Payroll Cheques or bank transfers
- 6) Distributes Payroll cheques or initiates direct deposits
- 7) Reviews and approves final payroll report
- 8) Records payroll expense in General Ledger
- 9) Reconciles payroll to General Ledger

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Suggestions for Best Practices

No one employee should have total responsibility for modifications to the Master file. One employee should initiate the change and a second employee should review and authorise the change. The employee who initiated the change could then make the change. Since this employee has access to the Employee Master file, this employee should not be directly involved in payroll process.

When a third party service provider is used, best practices would suggest that changes to Master file data should be communicated to the third party by employee who is not involved in recording of payroll activity, preparing reconciliations or check distribution.

Processing of payroll should be separated from approval function.

Employee not involved in payroll functions should investigate and reconcile returned payroll checks or rejected direct deposits.

Employee outside of direct payroll functions should post payroll journal (initiate journal generation) to general ledger.

Reconciliations should be performed by employee who does not have ability make journal entries or otherwise modify payroll.

When staff size limits separation of duties, the following compensating controls may help limit the severity of control weaknesses:
 Have supervisory level employee who is not directly involved with the payroll process review and approve payroll files prior to and after final processing.

If an employee involved in the payroll process also maintains the Employee Master file, consider generating a report of all payroll changes and have supervisory level employee review the changes against request forms.

Non-Current Assets

- 1) Initiates Purchase of Capital Assets (This may be covered in Purchasing Area above)
- 2) Approves Purchase of Capital Assets
- 3) Approves Capital Asset Disposals
- 4) Disposes of Capital Assets
- 5) Records Capital Asset additions and disposals in Asset Register
- 6) Performs periodic physical counts of Capital Assets
- 7) Reconciles physical Capital Asset counts to Asset Register
- 8) Makes adjustments to Asset Register
- 11) Maintains Asset Register (updates file for asset categories, useful lives and valuation and use)

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Suggestions for Best Practices

Asset Register files of asset categories should be restricted and not available to employees who are authorizing, recording and reconciling fixed assets.

Employees responsible for authorising purchases or disposals of capital assets should not have access to recording transactions in fixed assets ledger.

Periodic physical counts should **not** be performed by person(s) with authorisation or record keeping responsibilities. Some entities hire outside inventory service agencies if staff is not adequate.

Adjustments to the assets register should be reviewed and approved by a supervisory level employee not involved in maintaining fixed assets register.

When staff size limits separation of duties, the following compensating controls may help limit the severity of control weaknesses:

If purchasing and disposition procedures cannot be adequately separated, reports of all fixed asset additions, deductions and disposals could be reviewed and approved by a supervisory level employee not involved in the fixed assets process.

If recording and reconciliation procedures cannot be adequately separated, a supervisory level employee not involved in the fixed asset process could review a report of all adjustments made to help substantiate accuracy of recorded amounts.

General Ledger

- 1) Responsible for modifying (adding, deleting, structuring) General Ledger accounts
- 3) Approves changes to General Ledger accounts
- 4) Prepares journal entries for posting
- 5) Approves journal entries
- 6) Posts journal entries
- 7) Prepares financial statements from General Ledger
- 8) Approves financial statements

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Suggestions for Best Practices

Generally, the RFO and accounting department personnel should not have access to modify general ledger accounts or change mappings for these accounts. Normally these changes should be recorded after approval by RFO.

Employees responsible for preparing/initiating a journal entry should not be able to approve or record the journal entries.

Financial statements should be approved by supervisory personnel at a higher authority level than person preparing the financial statements.

If the general ledger system is configured so that journals cannot be approved prior to posting a compensating control would be to print a report of all journal entries at the end of each period and have a supervisory level employee who does not have access to record transactions review and approve the transactions that have been recorded.

Inventory

- 1) Receives goods from Supplier
- 2) Performs physical stock counts
- 3) Modifies stock records
- 4) Reconcilies physical stock counts to inventory records
- 5) Reconciles stock records to General Ledger
- 6) Reviews reconciliation of stock records to General Ledger
- 7) Disposes of obsolete (scrap) stock
- 8) Records adjustments (journal entries) to stock records and General Ledger

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Suggestions for Best Practices

Best practices suggest that employees who receive goods from suppliers should not be involved in purchasing or cash disbursement functions.

Physical stock counts should be performed by someone who does not have custody of stock.

Employee who has access to make modifications to stock system should not have access to make adjustments to general ledger

Reconciliation of stock system to physical counts and the general ledger should be performed by someone not responsible for maintaining the stock system.

On stock disposals, one employee should not be able to initiate and approve the disposal and also record these adjustments on the stock system and the general ledger.

When staff size limits separation of duties, the following compensating controls may help limit the severity of control weaknesses:

If physical counts cannot be performed by employee independent of the stock process, then spot checks of stock counts should be made by employee who is not custodian of stock assets or responsible for recording stock on accounting records.

If unable to adequately separate duties of maintaining stock system from reconciliation and posting, one suggestion would be to have supervisory personnel receive reports of changes to stock balances, paying particular attention to manual changes and adjustments.

If disposal activities cannot be adequately separated, a supervisory level employee could review and approve a listing of items identified for disposal against actual disposals recorded and income received from scrap sales.