

TAYLOR COUNTY Policy

&

Procedures

Manual

2020

**Revised/Approved
9/01/2025**

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The Taylor County Policy Manual is intended to convey a wide variety of county policies and procedures. The policies contained in the manual include codes of conduct, employee benefits, and many aspects of the day to day operations of the county. There are specifics about pay rates, hours worked as well as copier fees and purchasing policies just to name a few. All employees are responsible for reading this policy manual, to be aware of, and understand each policy.

Nothing in this policy manual should be construed as contractual in nature. All employees of Taylor County are *AT-WILL* employees.

Employees are encouraged to ask questions on any part or aspect of this manual. Questions can be directed to your supervisor, department head, elected official, anyone in the Human Resources Department, or a member of the Commissioners' Court.

Policy Manual Authority

These policies are established by the Commissioners' Court of Taylor County, Texas. Amendments, revisions or new additions to the policy manual must be approved by the Commissioners' Court. Each Department Head is responsible for the administration of these policies. Department Heads and supervisors, cannot modify, rescind or supplement these policies without the express approval of the Commissioners' Court.

Some Taylor County Departments are administered by publicly elected officials or funded as an agency of the State of Texas. In some circumstances, these departments may have more stringent policy guidelines. If there are conflicts between the Taylor County Policy Manual and a more stringent departmental policy, the departmental policy will prevail.

Any agreements or assurances concerning the terms, conditions or duration of an individual's employment are not binding unless they are in writing and approved by the Commissioners' Court.

At Will Employment Status

All employees of the County are "*at-will*" employees, which means that they are not employees under an employment contract. The *Employment At Will Doctrine*

simply means that either the employee or the employer can terminate the employment relationship for any legal reason or no reason and at any time, either with or without notice. Taylor County also has the right to change any condition, benefit, policy, or privilege of employment at any time, with or without notice. This manual does not create an employment contract, establish rights, privileges, or benefits of employment or establish any job guarantee.

Taylor County recognizes the right of a Department Head to discharge any employee at any time in accordance with the *Employment At Will Doctrine*. However, under no circumstances will an employee's constitutional rights be violated in the process.

The provisions of this policy manual are intended only as policy guidelines, and are not contractual in nature. The County can unilaterally rescind or modify the policies in this manual, or adopt new policies, at any time without notice. At no time will an Elected Official or Department Head say or do anything that would constitute a contract with an employee.

Exception: **USERRA ACT** – Refer to Active Duty Leave on page 43 of this manual.

Revisions

The Human Resources Department shall maintain complete sets of the Personnel Policies with all revisions for reference purposes and shall provide any revisions of such policies.

Definitions

To aid in understanding and to minimize confusion, certain words and phrases found in this policy manual in *italics* are defined in Appendix F - Definitions.

Suggestions

Employees are encouraged to make suggestions in writing to their Department Head or the Human Resources Department for improvements in these policies. Constructive, good faith recommendations are appreciated. Good ideas come from many sources - your idea may become the policy of tomorrow!

CHAPTER 2

HARASSMENT POLICY

Harassment

Taylor County is committed to a workplace free of harassment. Harassment includes unlawful unwelcome words, acts, or displays based on the specific statuses of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, genetic information, pregnancy, disability, family or military leave status, or veteran's status. Such conduct becomes harassment when (1) the submission to the conduct is made a condition of employment; (2) the submission to, or rejection of, the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision; or (3) the conduct creates an offensive, intimidating or hostile working environment or interferes with work performance.

Harassment is strictly prohibited by Taylor County whether committed by an Elected Official, Department Head, co-worker or non-employee with whom the county does business.

Employees who feel they have been harassed should immediately report the situation to the Elected Official or Department Head who is responsible for the department in which they work. If, for any reason, the employee feels that reporting the harassment to the Elected Official or Department Head may not be the best course of action, the report should be made to the Human Resources Director or to the County Judge.

Every reported complaint will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. The Elected Official or Department Head to which a claim has been reported shall be responsible for seeing that prompt action is taken to investigate the claim.

Once the investigation is complete, the employee making the claim shall be notified of the result of the investigation and any actions which are to be taken.

Retaliation against an employee who reports harassment or who cooperates in the investigation is prohibited by law as well as this policy. Employees who feel they have been subjected to illegal retaliation should immediately report the situation to the Elected Official or Department Head who is responsible for the department in which they work. If, for any reason, the employee feels that reporting the retaliation to the Elected Official or Department Head may not be the best course of action, the report should be made to the Human Resources Director or to the County Judge.

Remedial action will be taken in accordance with the circumstances when the county determines unlawful harassment or retaliation has occurred, up to and including termination.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is strictly prohibited by Taylor County, whether committed by an Elected Official, Department Head, co-worker, or non-employee the county does business with. It is the policy of Taylor County to provide a work place free from sexual harassment for all employees and to take active steps to eliminate any sexual harassment of which the County becomes aware.

Employees engaging in sexual harassment shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment. Sexual harassment shall include, but not be limited to, unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, non-verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature, which includes slurs, jokes, statements, gestures, touching, pictures, emails or cartoons where: (1) the submission to such conduct is either an expressed or implied condition of employment; or (2) the submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for an employment decision affecting the harassed person; or (3) the conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an affected person's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

All claims of sexual harassment shall be taken seriously and investigated promptly and thoroughly. While all claims of sexual harassment shall be handled with discretion, there can be no complete assurance of full confidentiality.

Employees who feel they have been sexually harassed should immediately report the situation to the Elected Official or Department Head who is responsible for the department in which they work. If, for any reason, the employee feels that reporting the harassment to the Elected Official or Department Head may not be the best course of action, the report should be made to the Human Resources Director or to the County Judge.

Every reported complaint will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. The Elected Official or Department Head to which a claim has been reported shall be responsible for seeing that prompt action is taken to investigate the claim.

Once the investigation is complete, the employee making the claim shall be notified of the result of the investigation and any actions which are to be taken.

Reporting Harassment or Sexual Harassment

Use the following procedures to report harassment or sexual harassment so that your complaint may be resolved quickly and fairly.

- When practical, confront the harasser and ask them to stop the unwanted behavior.
- Record the time, place and specifics of each incident, including any witnesses.
- Report continuing sexual harassment to the Elected Official or Department Head who is responsible for your department or to the Human Resources Director or to the County Judge.
- If a thorough investigation reveals that unlawful sexual harassment has occurred, Taylor County will take effective remedial action in accordance with the circumstances, up to and including termination.

Retaliation against an employee who reports harassment or who cooperates in the investigation is prohibited by law as well as this policy. Employees who feel they have been subjected to illegal retaliation should immediately report the situation to the Elected Official or Department Head who is responsible for the department in which they work. If, for any reason, the employee feels that reporting the retaliation to the Elected Official or Department Head may not be the best course of action, the report should be made to the Human Resources Director or to the County Judge.

Reporting or failing to report claims in accordance with the procedure given in this policy shall not limit other legal recourse an employee may have in regard to sexual harassment charges.

[Remainder of page intentionally left blank]

CHAPTER 3

RECRUITMENT & SELECTION

General Policy

Within budget and numerical limits set by the Commissioners' Court, each Department Head is responsible for the hiring and firing of employees working in their department.

Vacancies

It is recommended that Department Heads fill vacancies by promotion from within the County whenever possible.

When a job vacancy occurs that cannot be filled from within, the Department Head shall do the following:

- Notify the Human Resources Department of the vacancy as soon as possible and the Human Resources Department will post the opening on the official Taylor County website, as well as the HR job board. It is the County's practice to advertise in various publications and websites. Please let the HR/Risk Department know if you have any preference as to which ones will be used to list your job opening.
- The Human Resources Department will receive all applications to track equal employment statistics. They will then forward the applications to the Department Head, as they have requested.
- The Department Head will schedule and interview the most qualified applicants.
- The Department Head will select the applicant best qualified for the position and document the reasons for the selection.
- After the selection and the employment offer is accepted, all applications should be returned to the Human Resources Department.
- Notify the Human Resources Department and complete an employee new hire notice, when an applicant is hired. Include position the new employee will fill and their date of hire.
- Schedule the employee for *New Employee Orientation* with the Benefits Coordinator, preferably on their hire date, if possible.
- As a courtesy, the applicant should be sent notification of the employment decision. Coordinate this service with Human Resources.

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- The selected applicant will also be sent a letter (by text, email, or mail) from the HR/Risk Department identifying documents they need to bring with them to their orientation.

Applications for Employment

To be considered for employment, persons must complete and submit a Taylor County Application for Employment with the Human Resources Department. Taylor County will ONLY accept applications for budgeted, open positions. Taylor County will not keep applications on file for future openings.

All initial applications for employment are to be received and filed by the Human Resources Department for equal employment purposes.

Pre-Employment

The following sources of pre-employment references may be used by individuals screening job applicants: (1) Previous employers (2) Local law enforcement agencies (3) Personal character references.

New Employee Orientation

All new employees with Taylor County must be scheduled for an appointment with the Benefits Coordinator in the Human Resources Department for *new employee orientation*. Department Heads will schedule and inform employees of the briefing date and time. The orientation is usually scheduled on the first day of work.

New employee orientation consists of a benefits briefing and a safety briefing, completion of documentation required by state or federal law as well as completion of documentation related to Taylor County benefits and safety. These include personnel data forms, insurance, retirement, I-9's and any other required forms. At the orientation, the new employee will be made aware of how to access the Policy and Procedures Manual online.

The top section of the Federal I-9 form must be completed by the new employee by the close of business on their first (1st) day of employment. The Human Resources or the Department Head will check the employee's ID and complete the remainder of the I-9 form within three (3) days of hire date.

CHAPTER 4

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AND PRACTICES

General

Taylor County is a public, tax-supported entity. County employees must adhere to high standards of public service which emphasize professionalism, efficiency and courtesy. Employees must avoid situations where even the appearance of illegal or unethical conduct is possible. Employees are expected to efficiently carry out the job functions assigned, maintain good moral conduct, and strive to maintain good relationships with the public and co-workers.

Timeliness

All employees are required to be punctual. This includes arriving at work on time ready to perform all required job functions, returning from lunch at the prescribed time, and working until the shift or work day is over.

Dress/Behavior Code

Employees and Elected Officials of Taylor County are encouraged to set and meet high standards in performing quality work and to present a professional appearance to the public. Employees and Elected Officials are expected to exercise regular hygiene care and to dress in a professional manner as appropriate to the job being performed. Each department head will set the standard appropriate for the work being performed and will be responsible to enforce such standards; however, all garments worn must adequately cover the employee in a modest manner. Shorts of any nature shall not be permitted in any department and skirts, dresses, or garments of this nature must maintain a length of 2" above the knee or longer.

Employees and Elected Officials are required to act in a professional manner at all times and extend the highest courtesy to co-workers and to the public being served. A cheerful and positive attitude is essential to our commitment to customer service.

Conflict of Interest

Gifts, Favors, Remuneration, etc.

An employee may not solicit, accept or agree to accept any financial benefit, other than from the County that might reasonably tend to influence his or her performance of duties for the County.

An employee may not solicit, accept or agree to accept a financial benefit from another person in exchange for performing duties as a County employee.

Private Business Activities

Employees shall not engage in private business activities during their working hours and shall not use County property, equipment or facilities for such activities unless otherwise allowed by this policy. (EXAMPLE: Assistant District Attorneys may engage in private law practice, and use county equipment as long as the work does not interfere with their performance of their official duties. Consumable items must be reimbursed to the County.)

Outside Employment

No employee may accept employment for *compensation* that might reasonably tend to impair independence of judgment in the performance of their duties for the county.

Full-time employees shall not hold other positions of paid employment, including self-employment, without prior approval of their respective Department Head. A second job must never interfere with an employee's ability to perform their county job.

Political Activities

Employees of Taylor County shall have the right to support candidates of their choice and to engage in political activity during their personal time.

County employees shall not: 1) Use their official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the result of any election or nomination for office; 2) Directly or indirectly coerce, attempt to coerce, command, or advise another person to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value to a party, committee, organization, agency, or person for a political reason; or 3) Use any equipment, property or material owned by the County for political activity or engage in political activity while on duty for the County.

Employees MAY NOT engage in political activities during regular working hours. This includes campaigning for any political party or candidate. This policy does not apply to Elected Officials holding county office.

Contracting and Purchasing

The county will not enter into any contract to purchase any item from an elected county official or an employee. The county will not "do business" with any

business owned by an elected county official or who has a partnership, is a shareholder, officer, or director who is an elected county official.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Taylor County has been and will continue to be an equal opportunity employer. Taylor County's objective is to recruit, hire, train and promote persons in all job classifications without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, pregnancy, veteran status, or any other condition or status protected by federal, state, or local law in hiring, promotion, demotion, raises, termination, training, discipline, use of employee facilities or programs, or any other benefit, condition, or privilege of employment except where required by state or federal law or where a bona fide occupational qualification exists. All such decisions are made by utilizing objective standards based on the individual's qualifications as they relate to the particular job vacancy and to the furtherance of equal employment opportunity. If an employee needs an accommodation as a result of a condition or status protected by law, please advise your Elected Official, Department Head, or the Human Resources Director.

All employment procedures will be periodically audited to ensure that all employees are considered and evaluated only on the basis of job-related qualifications and individual abilities.

Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act

It is Taylor County's policy to reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with disabilities unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the county. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended (ADAAA), reasonable accommodations may be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities when such accommodations are necessary to enable them to perform the essential functions of their jobs, or to enjoy the equal benefits and privileges of employment. This policy applies to all applicants for employment, and all employees. If you require accommodation, please contact your Elected Official, Department Head, or the Human Resources Director.

It is the policy of Taylor County to prohibit any harassment of, or discriminatory treatment of employees on the basis of a disability or because an employee has requested a reasonable accommodation. If an employee feels he or she has been subject to such treatment, or has witnessed such treatment, the situation should be reported to your Elected Official, Department Head, or the Human Resources Director. All Elected Officials, Department Heads, and employees with responsibilities requiring knowledge are instructed to treat the employee's disability with confidentiality.

Nepotism Policy

It is the policy of the County for all County departments and offices to comply with the Texas *Nepotism* Statutes (Vernon's Texas Codes Annotated, Government Code, §573) which states: A public official or appointed official may not appoint, confirm the appointment of, or vote for the appointment or confirmation of the appointment of an individual to a position that is to be directly or indirectly compensated from public funds or fees of office if the individual and official are related to each other by the degrees established by state statute.

Individuals are related either by consanguinity (blood) or affinity (marriage). Individuals who are related within the third degree of consanguinity or the second degree by affinity to elected officials, appointed department heads or employees currently employed who would have supervisory authority over that individual are not eligible for employment with Taylor County.

Elected officials, appointed officials or any employee with questions about the nepotism statute or definitions of degrees are encouraged to direct their questions to the Human Resources Department. Employees employed as of May 1988 who are currently affected by this rule shall be "grandfathered".

[Remainder of page intentionally left blank]

CHAPTER 5

DRUG AND ALCOHOL-FREE WORKPLACE

Taylor County is a drug and alcohol-free workplace. A county employee may not be present at work during a period in which the employee's ability to perform his or her duties is impaired by drugs or alcohol. The County believes that a drug and alcohol-free workplace will help ensure a healthy, safe, and secure work environment. This policy will also ensure compliance with Section 411.091 of the Texas Department of Insurance "Workers' Compensation Act", and Texas Department of Insurance.

This policy applies to all employees of Taylor County regardless of rank or position and shall include full-time, part-time, and temporary employees.

The only exception to this policy is the possession of controlled substances by law enforcement personnel as part of their law enforcement duties.

An employee may not unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, sell, purchase, or use a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia on County property or while conducting County business not on County property.

An employee may not be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on County property or while on duty for the County.

An employee may not possess or use unauthorized prescription or over-the-counter drugs while on County property or while on duty for the County. An employee may not use prescription or over-the-counter drugs while on County property or while on duty for the County, in a manner other than that intended by the manufacturer or prescribed by a physician.

An employee may use prescription and over-the-counter drugs in standard dosage or according to a physician's prescription if the use will not impair the employee's ability to do his or her job safely and effectively. An employee must keep prescription medications used at work in their original container.

An employee taking prescribed or over-the-counter medications is responsible for consulting the prescribing physician or a pharmacist to determine if the medication could interfere with the safe and effective performance of his or her job duties.

If the use of a medication could compromise an employee's ability to do his or her job or the safety of the employee, fellow employees or the public, the employee must report the condition to his or her supervisor at the start of the

workday or used appropriate personnel procedures (e.g., call in sick, use leave, request change of duty).

A supervisor must treat any information related to an employee's authorized use of prescription medications and any other medical information provided by the employee as confidential information.

Any employee who violates this policy shall be subject to disciplinary measures up to and including termination.

All county employees who are covered by workers' compensation including elected officials must agree that the provisions of this policy are part of the terms and conditions of their employment and agree to abide by them.

Treatment, Education and Insurance Programs

Drug addiction and alcoholism are recognized as diseases responsive to proper treatment, and this will be an option as long as the employee cooperates. An employee having problems with drugs or alcohol is encouraged to seek treatment from a qualified professional. The group health insurance offered to employees and their dependents provides limited coverage for these programs. Information on benefits provided for treatment of alcohol and drug abuse problems is available in the employee's health plan booklet or from the Human Resources Office.

Drug and Alcohol Testing – All Employees

At this time, Taylor County does not have a county-wide employee drug and alcohol testing or screening policy. Taylor County recognizes that drugs and alcohol are a serious national problem in personal lives and in the workplace.

There are certain positions that require county employees to undergo drug and alcohol testing or evaluation. The job functions of these positions require the testing either by a bona fide occupational requirement or when the testing is required by state or federal statute. A separate policy is provided for these testing programs.

Taylor County reserves the right to test individual employees, not included in current programs for illegal drugs, alcohol, and controlled substances for reasonable cause. Furthermore, Taylor County reserves the right to design and implement a county-wide employee drug and alcohol testing and screening policy.

Drug and Alcohol Testing – CDL Employees

CDL Drivers are an extremely valuable resource for Taylor County's business. Their health and safety is a serious County concern. Drug or alcohol use may pose a serious threat to driver health and safety. It is, therefore, the policy of the County to prohibit CDL employees from being under the influence of or using illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours.

The Federal Highway Administration ("FHWA") has issued regulations, which require the County to implement a controlled substance testing program. The County will comply with these. All CDL drivers are advised that remaining drug-free and medically qualified to drive are conditions of continued employment with the County.

Specifically, it is the policy of Taylor County that the use, sale, purchase, transfer, possession or presence in one's system of any controlled substance (except medically prescribed drugs) or alcohol by any CDL driver while on County premises, engaged in County business, while operating County equipment, or while under the authority of the County is strictly prohibited. Mandatory testing must apply to every person who operates a commercial motor vehicle in interstate or intrastate commerce and is subject to the CDL licensing requirement. Taylor County will conduct pre-employment, random, reasonable suspicion and post-accident drug testing in accordance with federal law. A detailed policy and procedure is available at the Human Resources office.

[Remainder of page intentionally left blank]

CHAPTER 6

EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES

Categories

There are three (3) categories of employment with the County.

- **REGULAR FULL TIME:** A full time employee shall be any employee in a position which has a normal work schedule of at least 30 hours per week. Full time employees are eligible for county benefits for which they are qualified. Employees may be non-exempt, hourly employees or exempt employees. Non-exempt employees are eligible for overtime compensation. Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime compensation. Taylor County makes exempt status determination based on the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- **REGULAR PART TIME:** A part time employee shall be any employee in a position which has a normal work schedule of less than an average of 29 hours per week. All regular part time employees must be placed on TCDRS retirement regardless of the number of hours worked per week.
- **TEMPORARY:** A temporary employee shall be any employee who is hired into a position that is expected to last for a specific duration or until a specific project is completed. Temporary employees may have work schedules as assigned by their manager. Temporary employees are not entitled to any county benefits, including holiday pay.

All employees are considered to be “at will” employees and employee status shall not be considered a contract of employment.

CHAPTER 7

WORK SCHEDULE & TIME REPORTING

Standard County Work Week

For payroll purposes the work week will be 40 hours a week beginning at 12:01 Monday morning and continuing through 12:00 midnight Sunday. All Taylor County facilities' hours of operation are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Schedule Adjustment

Employee work schedules are set by Department Heads. Regardless of the work schedule, full time employees must work at least 30 hours per week, unless accrued leave is charged on the employee's time sheet.

Breaks

Breaks are NOT required under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Department Heads may allow employees up to (2) paid fifteen minute breaks taken separately during each work day. These breaks will be scheduled by the Department Head. No office should be left unattended during break time.

Taylor County will provide up to (2) paid 15 minutes breaks daily for nursing mothers. The nursing mother will be allowed whatever time is needed to express breast milk, however, if the break is longer than 15 minutes in duration, the additional break time will be unpaid time off. The mother will be given a private location, other than a bathroom. The location will be shielded from view and free from intrusion and appropriate for expressing breast milk. The specific location will be determined on a case by case basis. Taylor County does not allow any retaliation against nursing mothers for asking for this break. Nursing mothers are entitled to this break for 1 year following the birth of their child.

Lunch

Employees will be allowed one hour for lunch, unless otherwise directed by the Department Head. The normal lunch hour shall be from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. Some individual departments remain open during this one hour period in order to better serve the public. In these instances, Department Heads may choose to

alternate times or schedules for lunch breaks for employees if it is deemed that their particular office should remain open during the regularly scheduled period.

Overtime or Compensatory Time

Employees may be required to work overtime in addition to those hours in their regular work week. Non-exempt employees **MUST HAVE PRIOR APPROVAL** from their Department Head before working overtime. For all overtime worked, employees are required to provide a description/explanation of the time worked over their scheduled work day or shift on their time sheet. Exempt employees are not eligible to earn compensatory time, except in certain declared disaster situations. Any deviations from this policy must have prior approval of the Commissioners' Court.

Earning Overtime

By the Fair Labor Standards Act, all covered non-exempt employees shall be paid overtime pay for time worked in excess of 40 hours in any workweek. Overtime pay is defined by the FLSA as (at least) one and one half of the regular rate an employee is paid. Taylor County elects to provide employees with compensatory time in lieu of cash payment, except as allowed for in the next section of this policy (see "Compensation for Overtime Earned"). Compensatory time is defined as one and one half hours earned for every hour worked over 40 hours. Note: Law enforcement employees fall under separate rules detailed below.

Overtime is earned for hours worked within the work week. Paid leave (vacation, emergency, sick, or compensatory time used in the period) shall not be counted in the determination of overtime earned.

Law Enforcement Pay and Overtime - Section 207(k) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) provides that employees engaged in fire protection or law enforcement may be paid overtime on a "work period" basis. Taylor County elects to define this work period as 7 days, starting consecutively from Monday to Sunday within the adopted payroll calendar. In accordance with the FLSA, certified law enforcement and correctional personnel have been designated as 207K Employees by the County. Overtime will be earned by these employees after 43 hours are worked within the defined work period

Overtime is earned for hours worked within the work week. Paid leave (vacation, emergency, sick, or compensatory time used in the period) shall not be counted in the determination of overtime earned.

Hospital Duty for Detention Workers – a correctional officer (jail/juvenile probation), or law enforcement officer carrying a current jailers license, that works extra time for supervision of an inmate at a medical facility will be paid overtime pay for hospital time worked on the next pay cycle, regardless of current work hours accrued.

As an addition to the implemented 207(k) policy, certified law enforcement and correctional personnel will earn compensatory time at the rate of one hour for the hours work between 40 and 43 hours.

Compensatory Time

A non-exempt employee (excluding election workers as detailed below) cannot accumulate more than 60 hours of compensatory time. **Any accumulation over 60 hours of compensatory time will be paid out at the overtime rate of time and a half in the pay period that it is earned.**

At least once per year, compensatory time balances will be reviewed by the commissioners' court. At that time, approval may be granted to pay a portion of the balance at the employee's current rate of pay.

Contracted Services with outside entities – For employees that work normal hours and/or overtime that will be reimbursed to the County under an agreement with an outside entity, these employees will be paid for overtime earned on the next pay cycle, regardless of current hours accrued.

Election Workers – Due to the cyclical nature of the election cycles, election compensatory time will be treated differently in different years. In an even numbered fiscal year election worker will be allowed to accumulate no more than 200 hours of compensatory time at a given time throughout the year. Any accumulation over 200 hours of compensatory time will be paid out at the overtime rate of time and a half in the pay period that it is earned. In an odd numbered fiscal year, any compensatory time remaining over 60 hours at the end of the fiscal year will be paid out at the current rate of pay.

Dispatch – Due to the 24/7 cycle of on duty for dispatch and the small size of employees available for rotation, at any time that a dispatch position is unfilled, dispatch employees will be paid for overtime worked on the next pay cycle, regardless of current hours accrued. Once all positions are filled, these employees will return to the normal 60 hour threshold before overtime will be paid. Employees will return to the normal threshold beginning in the next pay cycle after all positions are filled.

Road Crew After Hour Call Outs — Road employees are eligible for paid overtime (at standard rates) or accrue comp time for responding to call outs and mutual aid after working hours, including weekends. Accruals and paid overtime for call response is limited to fires, flooding, snow/ice and other natural disaster situations. Paid overtime is also limited to available payroll budgets within the respective department and at the discretion of each Commissioner.

Exempt employees who are called out to work during a **disaster situation** such as a wild fire, tornado, or flood may be compensated for overtime by the county. Commissioners' Court will approve compensation on a case by case basis, depending on the situation; grant monies available and unknown circumstances. If employees are compensated, the county would be eligible to seek reimbursement through a FEMA grant.

Commissioners' Court will approve compensation on a case by case basis, depending on the situation; grant monies available and unknown circumstances. If employees are compensated, the county would be eligible to seek reimbursement through a FEMA grant.

Flex Time

If an employee is required by his/her Department Head to work more than their regular work day, the Department Head is encouraged to reduce work hours another day during the same work week. This will ensure that the employee does not exceed 40 hours in their regular work week.

Department Heads are strongly encouraged to “flex” their employee’s time to avoid their working overtime.

Time Sheets

It is very important that all time worked be recorded accurately. Each year the Commissioners' Court budgets salaries for each position within the county. The salary for each position is based upon 40 hours per week. If an employee does not completely fill out their timesheet, any missing time will be pulled from the employee’s available (in this order) compensatory time, vacation time, or sick time banks.

Inaccurate time sheets, no matter the cause, may violate the Fair Labor

Standards Act (federal law) as well as be an inaccurate accounting of County expenses. Time sheets are government documents and as such require accurate and truthful information. Falsification of a time sheet, a government record, is a criminal offense.

The following procedures should be followed in reporting time for payroll to the Auditor's Office:

Non-exempt employees (Employees who are covered by the overtime protections of the Fair Labor Standards Act)

- Time sheets will be used to record ACTUAL hours worked in each work day and week. Each time sheet will cover (two) forty hour periods. Each time sheet will be approved by the Department Head or immediate supervisor.
- Any time worked over 40 hours in a designated county workweek should be noted in the Overtime Worked column.
- Authorized absences from work for accrued sick leave, vacation time, and emergency leave will be denoted on the time sheet by entering the time off in the Sick Leave, Vacation Leave, or Emergency/Funeral Leave column.
- When posting compensatory time usage, post time taken in Comp Time Used column.
- Time sheets will be turned in to the Department Head or supervisor on the Friday ending the two week time period. Each office will deliver all time sheets to the Auditor's Office no later than 10:00 a.m. on Monday. The only exception will be when a holiday is on Monday. The deadline after a holiday will be 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday. Any time sheets turned in after the deadline will not be paid until the next pay period.
- If an employee is absent on Friday when time sheets are signed, the Department Head or supervisor should approve the time sheets and submit to the Auditor's Office. The time sheets will be returned to the Department Head later for the employee's signature.

Exempt employees (Employees who are exempt from the overtime protection of the Fair Labor Standards Act)

- Time sheets will be used to record use of accrued leave only. Exempt employees should record only that portion of the work week on which the employee used accrued leave.
- Actual time worked should not be recorded.
- Absences from work for accrued sick leave, vacation time, and emergency leave will be denoted on the time sheets by entering the time off in the Sick

Leave, Vacation Leave, or Emergency/Funeral Leave column.

- Time sheets will be turned in to the Department Head or supervisor on the Friday ending the two week time period. Each office will deliver all time sheets to the Auditor's Office no later than 10:00 a.m. on Monday. The only exception will be when a holiday is on Monday. The deadline after a holiday will be 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday. Any time sheets turned in after the deadline will not be paid until the next pay period.
- If an employee is absent on Friday when time sheets are signed, the Department Head or supervisor should approve the time sheets and submit to the Auditor's Office. The time sheets will be returned to the Department Head later for the employee's signature.

CHAPTER 8

EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION & ADVANCEMENT

Pay Rate Determination

Taylor County maintains a pay classification plan called the Taylor County Compensation & Classification Matrix (see Appendix A) by which each class of positions is assigned to a *pay Category and Level* with minimum and maximum levels based on the principle of equal pay for equal work. The Matrix consists of **six Categories** broken down into a series of vertical pay Levels that are based on job responsibilities, needed skill levels, and knowledge.

The Pay Classification Matrix is reviewed regularly by the Personnel Committee (see pg. 18) to recommend adjustments based on cost of living, merit, and market analysis. Recommendations by the Personnel Committee are made directly to the Commissioners' Court and may be granted based on anticipated revenue for the coming fiscal year. Any merit increases granted by the Commissioners' Court, will be the responsibility of Department Heads to allocate by percentage within their departments as appropriate based on their review of each employee's performance. Any cost of living increases granted by the Commissioners' Court will be allocated to all eligible county employees. Any market leveling increases granted by the Commissioners' Court will be position specific as it relates to the Personnel Committee's market analysis.

Exception: The salaries of court reporters, assistant auditors, and the County Auditor, are set by local district judges. Accordingly, they may or may not track the pay classification matrix.

Maintenance of the Plan

The Commissioners' Court, during budget hearings, shall approve the number and pay rate of all full time, part time, and temporary positions allotted to each department. Departments will not be allowed positions in excess of those approved by the Commissioners' Court.

When an employee resigns or otherwise terminates their employment, and another county employee is not promoted from within, the salary for that position will be left to Department Head discretion within budget constraints. Under no circumstance may a Department Head exceed the maximum salary level established by the Compensation & Classification Matrix Levels.

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee is created and appointed by the Commissioners' Court for the purpose of providing review and recommendation as it relates to the assignment and alteration of the Employee Compensation & Classification Matrix. The Human Resources (HR) Director serves as the non-voting Chairperson of the Personnel Committee (except in the event of a tied vote, quorum, or conflict of interest) and is one of three (3) permanent members. The County Judge and County Auditor also serve as permanent members of the committee. The remainder of the committee consists of five (5) department heads who supervise one or more employees: a County Commissioner, the Sheriff or a Constable, the District Attorney or the Chief Juvenile Officer, and two (2) Department Heads responsible for supervising the Categories of Clerical and Administrative.

These committee members serve two (2) year terms and may serve additional terms alternately. The HR Director will schedule meetings of the Personnel Committee for the purpose of evaluating the Employee Compensation & Classification Matrix to consider recommendations regarding costs of living and merit increases. The Committee will conduct a market analysis of all salaries every two (2) years. Every five (5) years the Committee will conduct a comprehensive market analysis (salaries and benefits). All recommendations by the Personnel Committee to the Commissioners' Court may be granted providing sufficient revenue is available.

Conflict of Interest: Personnel Committee members may make formal presentations for classification review of their salaries and those within their department, however, they will not be eligible to vote.

Committee Quorum: A quorum, at any regular or special meeting, shall be five (5) members who are eligible to vote or to conduct business. The majority of the quorum must be in agreement for the purposes of any recommendation to the Commissioners' Court.

Removal from Committee: Members attending less than half of the scheduled meetings within a given six (6) month period will be recommended for

replacement by the Personnel Committee Chairperson.

Staffing Levels

Department Heads may request changes in the number and/or quantity of employees in the individual classification matrix levels when a substantive change is made to the essential job functions. Substantive changes are those which involve increases or decreases in skills, responsibilities, or knowledge due to significant change in statutory responsibilities, increase in business levels, etc. A substantive change does not include increased duties or heavier workload.

Upon receiving a Department Head's written request for changes in the number and/or quantity of their employee(s), the Personnel Committee will determine where the requested new position(s) falls in the Taylor County Compensation Matrix. The Commissioners' Court has final approval of the requested new position(s).

Department Heads are encouraged to seek ways to reduce staffing levels whenever possible. At any time within a budget year, a Department Head may reduce staff, reallocate those responsibilities to one or more current staff, and redistribute the salary of the eliminated position as they see fit as long as individual salaries remain within the maximum levels established by the Compensation & Classification Matrix.

Requests for changes should be submitted to the Human Resources Director to be presented to the Personnel Committee by April 1st in order to provide sufficient time for the review and recommendation process prior to the annual budget process.

In considering requests for changes, the Personnel Committee will evaluate the responsibilities and qualifications of the position as they relate to the Level Matrix by reviewing the job description as well as conducting interviews with the Department Head and gathering other information as necessary. This process may also include research such as state statutes and contacting similar counties who have comparable positions.

After reaching their decision, the Personnel Committee will report its findings to the Department Head. If it is agreed that Level or Category advancement is appropriate, the HR Director, on behalf of the Personnel Committee, will recommend the requested change for consideration and approval by the Commissioners' Court.

Elected Officials (Approval Pending Elected Officials Review)

Elected Officials are not included on the Taylor County Compensation Classification Matrix, but rather assume office at a pre-determined salary set by

approval of the Commissioners' Court. Elected Officials may receive salary increases along with other county employees as it relates to cost of living and market analysis leveling. Additionally, Elected Officials may receive longevity pay for their years of service to the county at an annual rate to be set by the Commissioners' Court. Elected Officials are, however, exempt from receiving any form of merit pay.

Pay Day

The county pays its employees on a bi-weekly basis every other Thursday. In the event that a pay day falls on a county holiday, checks are distributed on the preceding workday.

Check Delivery

Paychecks may be picked up at the designated time in the Treasurer's Office. No money will be loaned to employees and no advances will be made by the County for any reason.

Checks can only be picked-up by the Department Heads or their designated employee. Designated employees must register with the Treasurer's office prior to pay day. An employee may request their check to be mailed to their home or may be direct deposited.

Promotions

It is Taylor County's policy to encourage the promotion of qualified employees whenever possible. A promotion is the elevation of an employee from a position at one Level to a new or vacant position in a higher pay Level already funded by the Commissioners' Court.

When an employee is promoted to a position in a higher Level, the Department Head may determine Level placement based on budgeted available funds. Under no circumstance may a Department Head exceed the maximum salary level established by the Compensation & Classification Matrix Levels.

Lateral Transfers

A lateral transfer is the movement of an employee between positions in the same pay Category. Lateral transfers may be made within the same department or among departments of the county. Lateral transfers will not change the Category or Level.

Demotions/Reassignments

A demotion is a change in duty assignment of an employee from a position in one pay Category or Level to a position in a lower pay Category or Level. An employee, who is demoted for disciplinary reasons, will have his or her pay reduced at least ten (10) percent in accordance with county policy (see Chapter 14).

Payroll Deductions

Deductions will be made from each employee's pay for the following:

- Federal Income Taxes
- Social Security
- Employee's contribution to the Texas County & District Retirement System.

In accordance with procedures approved by the Commissioners' Court, deductions from an employee's pay may be authorized by the employee for:

Group Health/Dental Insurance	United States Savings Bonds
Group Life Insurance	United Way of Abilene
Deferred Compensation	

An employee's pay may be garnished by or for:

Court ordered child support	Internal Revenue
Service Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation	Bankruptcy Court

Direct Deposit

Effective 10/01/12, new employees will be signed up for direct deposit. Payroll checks may be direct deposited into two separate accounts or into two accounts in separate financial institutions. Employees hired prior to 10/01/12 may continue to receive their payroll check in full or in part with the remainder deposited in an account.

The Human Resources Office will be responsible to have all appropriate paperwork completed by new employees relative to Direct Deposit during New Employee Orientation. As part of the enrollment process, employees will need to provide a voided check or personalized deposit with the appropriate account information. If, in the instance of a savings account, a voided check or personalized deposit slip is not available, the employee will need to provide their account number and the financial institution's routing number.

After the enrollment form has been completed and verified, the first payroll period will be the test period. The Auditor's office will test the procedure with the employee's pay and financial institution information. The employee will still receive a pay check. The second payroll will be the actual direct deposit and the employee will receive a voided voucher as a receipt.

Taylor County has no control over when the employee's financial institution actually posts direct deposits to their account. As such, Taylor County assumes no risk or liability for the employee's pay after the financial institution receives the transfer. Employees are encouraged to check to ensure that the money has been credited to their account before writing checks.

Calculation of Separation/Termination (Vacation/Comp. Time) Pay

Upon separation/termination from employment, employees will be paid for their unused accrued vacation leave, up to a maximum of 120 hours at their current rate of pay.

Employees who are subsequently elevated or appointed to elected positions will be paid their unused accrued vacation leave accordingly.

Earned unused Comp. Time will be paid upon separation/termination to the employee at their current rate of pay in accordance with the Federal Labor Standards Act.

As stated in the aforementioned county policy, payment for unused accrued vacation leave and earned unused Comp. Time will be included in the employee's final paycheck and will be calculated based on balance of hours and taxed at the standard rate used for regular pay.

Wages-in-Lieu of Notice

Upon separation/termination from county employment, employees will be paid for accrued and unused vacation leave, up to the limit of their maximum allowable accumulation based upon length of employment. Payment for such leave will be included in the employee's final paycheck and will be calculated based on balance of hours and taxed at the standard rate used for regular pay.

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CHAPTER 9

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

As a benefit of employment, Taylor County provides an excellent benefit package to eligible employees. Most of the expense or the premium of benefits are paid for the employee entirely by the County. In some cases, the benefits are available for spouses and certain family members, although at the employee's expense. Booklets and other information on benefits are available in the Human Resources Department.

New permanent full-time employees will have a 60-day waiting period prior to health, dental, vision, & life insurance benefits becoming effective. New permanent full-time employees who have been in a full-time employment capacity with a third-party vendor but performing work on behalf of Taylor County for 60 or more consecutive days (i.e. temporary-to-hire agency, former health clinic agency, etc.), employed as part-time for 60 or more consecutive days, or employed as a temporary full-time employee for 60 or more consecutive days prior to becoming a permanent full-time employee will have their benefits waiting period waived with benefits becoming effective upon their first date of permanent full-time employment. Elected Officials shall not have a waiting period for benefits and will have all benefits become effective upon their first day in office as an Elected Official.

Group Insurance

Taylor County pays 100% of the premiums for all full time employees to be covered with group health and dental insurance. The County also provides basic life insurance and accidental death or dismemberment at no cost to the employee. Optional spouse and family coverage is available, at the employee's expense and is payroll deducted.

State and District Employees

Any employee who has a majority of their salary paid by agencies other than Taylor County (Example: Extension Agents, District Attorney, District Judges, federal and state grant personnel) can have group insurance benefits through the county. The State's group insurance or Texas A & M group insurance will be the primary coverage and the county group insurance the secondary coverage for these employees.

The employee must be covered on the County's coverage in order to have dependent coverage. The dependent coverage will be payroll deducted.

Retiree Group Insurance Continuation

When an employee retires, they may continue the county's group health, dental and life benefits for themselves and any eligible dependent that is on the county's group coverage. The retiree and dependents must pay 100% of their premiums as set by the Taylor County Commissioners Court. When a covered child dependent no longer qualifies under the IRS Rule or has reached age 26, their coverage ceases.

Once the retiree or their spouse reaches age 65, Medicare will become the primary coverage and the County coverage will be secondary. If the retiree becomes eligible for Medicare before the spouse, the spouse will be allowed to

continue coverage until they are 65 years of age and becomes eligible for Medicare as a primary, moving the county policy to secondary. Should the retiree die, the covered spouse would be allowed to remain on the plan continuing the coverage.

Social Security

All employees of the County have social security deducted from their payroll. The county matches the social security.

Long Term Disability

Taylor County funds 100% of the cost for Long Term Disability coverage for all full time employees. An employee must be off work continuously for 90 days to be eligible to receive benefits. This is the reason employees are allowed to accrue between 60 and 90 days (depending on each employee's date of hire) of sick leave. If an employee is off work due an illness or injury, the employee would have enough accrued sick leave to continue receiving their regular salary until they became eligible for Long Term Disability Insurance. During the 90 day period, the county will continue health benefits for the employee under FMLA. If an employee is unable to obtain a medical release to return to work performing their job essentials, a department head may allow the employee to perform transitional duties, unless this creates a hardship for the department. If the department head deems termination is necessary, he/she will then ensure FMLA requirements have been met, prior to any decision to terminate employment. After termination, the employee may continue their health benefits under COBRA. If the employee later receives a medical release they can reapply for employment.

If a department head determines that it is in the best interest of their department to keep a position open for the employee out on long term disability, then the employee's benefits will continue to be funded by the County. If because of departmental staffing considerations the position is filled, the employee on long term disability may continue their benefits on the COBRA plan.

Please see the Human Resources Department for more information or assistance.

Flex Plan

Taylor County provides employees with the option to have dependent insurance premiums payroll deducted before taxes. The Flex Plan is a tax saving program based on Section 125 of the IRS code.

Retirement Plan

All Taylor County full-time and part-time employees who work in a budgeted position are required to participate in the Texas County and District Retirement System. Taylor County also makes a contribution to the Texas County and District Retirement System, the deposit is based upon a percentage of the employee's salary. This amount further funds the employee's retirement benefits. Participation will be at the rate of deposit in effect at the time of employment. The same rate of deposit will apply to all employees.

The "Texas Counties and District Retirement System (TCDRS) Information Handbook", explains in informal language the major features of the Texas County and District Retirement Act. Copies of this booklet can be obtained from the Human Resources Department.

TCDRS Rules:

- County employees have 7% withheld from their paychecks and deposited into their TCDRS account. Beyond that an employee may not make additional deposits into their TCDRS account.
- Taylor County's contribution is determined annually and for the past few years has exceeded 7%.
- An employee cannot withdraw money from their TCDRS account while the employee is still working for the county employer.
- An employee may not borrow money or get loans from any TCDRS account.

The laws and regulations that govern the TCDRS are subject to legislative changes.

Deferred Compensation

All full and part time county employees have the option of deferring a portion of their salaries to invest for retirement before taxes. This means that an employee can save for retirement through payroll deduction and lower their taxable gross income. This optional program is in addition to the required participation in the Texas County and District Retirement System.

Taylor County's deferred compensation program – called a 457(b) Plan – is provided through VALIC and Nationwide Retirement Solutions.

Employees may find out more about this program, or set up an appointment with the deferred compensation program's representative by contacting the Human Resources Department.

Worker's Compensation

Worker's Compensation Insurance is provided for all employees to protect the employee from damages or expenses resulting from a work related injury or illness.

FOR AN ON THE JOB INJURY OR WORK RELATED INJURY TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR COVERAGE UNDER WORKER'S COMPENSATION; A WRITTEN INJURY REPORT MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE INSURANCE CARRIER WITHIN 7 DAYS.

An employee's workers' compensation benefits may be adversely affected if the employee is injured while under the influence of alcohol or drugs or while the employee is engaging in horseplay.

■ **Reporting on the Job Injuries**

Employees shall report to their Department Head or supervisor, **all job-related illnesses and injuries at the time they occur**, no matter how minor the injury or illness appears. It is the responsibility of the workers compensation insurance carrier to determine if benefits are allowable.

Failure to provide notification to the Human Resources Department may result in rejection of any claim, placing the health care expense solely onto the employee.

■ **Medical Attention**

When an on the job injury has occurred, an accident report form must be filled out completely by the employee and/or their Department Head or supervisor and returned to the Human Resources Department (Risk Manager) as quickly as possible after the accident. Our insurance carrier requires a written injury report within 7 days after the injury.

Health care providers typically contact the Human Resources Department to verify coverage and eligibility. It is helpful therefore, if the employee's Department Head or supervisor notify the Human Resources Department (Risk Manager) when an employee seeks medical attention.

An employee, who sustains an on-the-job illness or injury, may seek medical attention from the medical facility or professional of his/her choice as long as the doctor accepts on-the-job injuries or workers' compensation claims. Some physicians do not accept on-the-job injuries for treatment. The county may require medical progress reports and release to return to work forms from the attending physician.

■ Salary Continuance

If an employee sustains an on-the-job injury or illness that renders him/her temporarily unable to perform the essential functions of the job, the employee will receive salary continuance as follows:

- For up to seven (7) days, the employee receives his/her regular pay for that period with the time charged to accrued sick leave or vacation leave unless the employee chooses to be off without pay.
- Beginning on the 8th day and for any days thereafter, if the employee is unable to work, the employee receives weekly benefits from the insurance carrier in accordance with the current Workers Compensation Law.
- **Exception - All law enforcement personnel must be paid salary continuance in accordance with Section 157.005 of the Local Government Code in reference to Article III, Section 52e of the Texas Constitution. Salary continuance will begin from the date of injury.**

All employees who are placed on Worker's Compensation leave will fall under the Family Medical Leave Act. Taylor County runs FMLA and Worker's Compensation concurrently.

Further information on Worker's Compensation coverage is available in the Human Resources Department or the Texas Department of Insurance.

Worker's Compensation – Return to Work

An employee who has lost time because of a work related accident or illness is required to provide a release from the attending physician before being allowed to return to work.

Arrangements to facilitate an employee's early return to work are made in consultation with attending physicians, department heads and the Human Resource Office.

The following options are available:

- An employee is offered the opportunity to return to their prior position if the attending physician certifies the employee can perform the essential functions of the job with/without reasonable accommodations.
- Employees not yet able to return to their former duties are offered, subject to restrictions set out in policy, a temporary transitional duty assignment. The

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- transitional duties must not exceed the restrictions stated on the employee's medical release.
- The Department Head will develop and implement a transitional duty assignment, which could consist of the employee's regular job, with reduced work hours or reduced activities, or an alternative transitional duty position.
 - Transitional duty assignments are temporary arrangements intended to facilitate the healing process and cannot exceed 90 days. After 90 days, an employee is eligible to apply for long term disability.
 - Employees in transitional duty positions that are not working full hours are not permitted to supplement their county salary by using accrued leave time. If they have been released back to partial work they will be receiving partial Worker's Compensation benefits.

An employee who has received a medical release for modified duty and has been offered a temporary transitional position and refuses the offer may be separated from employment.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

Federal law imposes upon group health plans certain limitations of pre-existing condition exclusion periods, special enrollment periods for individuals and dependents losing coverage, prohibitions against discriminating against individual participants and beneficiaries based upon health status, standards relating to benefits for mothers and newborns, and parity in the application of certain limits to mental health benefits.

Federal law allows a non-federal governmental plan such as the Taylor County Employee Benefits Plan to exempt its plan in whole or in part from these requirements. Taylor County has elected to be exempt from the following requirements: Limitations on pre-existing condition exclusion periods, special enrollment periods for individuals and dependents losing other coverage, prohibitions against discriminating against individual participants and beneficiaries based on health status, standards relating to benefits for mothers and newborns, and parity in the application of certain limits to mental health benefits. Because of this election, employees and dependents will be subject to benefit limits even if they had 12 or 18 months of coverages under another plan within the last 63 days. The duration of a hospital confinement for a mother and newborn following the birth of a child will be determined based on medical necessity and mental health benefits have an annual and lifetime maximum which is less than these maximums for other medical conditions. Even though the plan is exempt, employees and dependents will be able to enroll, if they have a qualifying event during the plan year as set out in the current health benefit booklet and no individual will be declined coverage or charged a higher rate

based on a medical condition. The plan's qualifying events are more liberal than in the federal law.

Taylor County has taken this exemption in an effort to continue providing group health benefits at the same level and with no additional cost to the county or to the employee.

Employee's HIPAA Responsibility:

Employees should not discuss their personal health information with other employees of Taylor County. The county will not be liable for an employee's discussion of their Personal Health Information (PHI) with others.

Insurance Continuation

Employees who leave the County may continue their group medical and dental benefits through "COBRA" law at the employees' expense. Please see the Human Resources Department for further information.

Benefit Information

All employee benefit information, including coverage booklets, can be obtained from the Human Resources Department.

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CHAPTER 10

LEAVE

Paid leave time is another Taylor County employment benefit for employees. This chapter defines and explains the many different types of leave which are available to county employees. The two basic categories of leave are *accrued leave* (i.e. vacation, sick, etc.) and leave time that is granted due to other circumstances (i.e. military service, citizenship, etc.).

Continuous Service

Vacation and Sick leave are accrued by employees each month. The amount of vacation and sick leave accrued by employees will increase according to the employee's length of service. The length of service, for calculating leave accrual must be continuous. Continuous service will be calculated, as of the date that an employee is considered a regular full-time employee. This will not necessarily be the date when the employee is hired. For instance, employment in a part time position does not count toward continuous service.

If an employee leaves employment at the county and is later rehired, continuous service will be calculated from the most recent date the employee was hired for regular full-time status. Prior service time will only be credited for service awards.

Accrued Leave

There are three types of accrued leave; vacation, sick and emergency leave. The Auditor's Office is responsible for keeping records of accrued leave time balances for each employee.

Full-time employees are the only employee category approved to receive accrued leave.

Elected Officials, state personnel, and officials appointed to elected positions are not eligible to accumulate accrued leave.

Vacation Leave

Schedule of Accrual

Employees accrue vacation leave according to the following schedule:

Continuous Service	Accrued Vacation Leave
0 - 60 months	8 hours per month
Over 61 months	10 hours per month

Accrual of Vacation Leave

Accrued vacation time begins with the first day of the month following the beginning date of regular, full-time employment. During the first six months of employment, vacation leave may not be used unless approved in advance by the department head. ***No vacation time will accrue during a period covered by Long Term Disability or Worker's Compensation or for any employee who remains on an unpaid leave status for two consecutive pay periods.*** An unpaid leave status is defined as any pay period with no physical hours worked and the employee does not utilize any form of paid leave (vacation, sick, COMP, etc). For example, a pay period where an employee did not have any physical hours worked or ***did not*** elect to use available paid leave (vacation, sick, COMP, etc.) ***would not*** accrue vacation time in accordance with this policy. Employees are required to exhaust all available paid leave prior to entering into an unpaid leave status. ***This policy does not apply to an employee on covered military leave, as defined under chapters 10 and 11 of this policy.***

Maximum Accumulation

Employees hired prior to January 1, 2015, will be allowed to accumulate up to 200 hours of unused vacation leave.

After January 1, 2015, should that balance drop below 160 hours that will be the maximum number of unused vacation leave hours allowed for each employee.

For employees hired on or after January 1, 2015, the maximum accumulation allowable of unused vacation leave is 160 hours.

Payment Upon Separation/Termination

Upon separation/termination from employment, employees will be paid for accrued and unused vacation leave up to a maximum of 120 hours at their current rate of pay.

Scheduling Vacation Time

Employees are required to request times for vacation leave, whenever possible, well in advance of their planned absence. Requests for vacation leave should be made to the employee's Elected Official, Department Head, or supervisor, depending on the individual department's policy. Vacation leave will be granted if the request places no undue hardship on the employee's department. Substitution of Vacation Leave for Sick Leave

Employees may elect to substitute vacation leave for sick leave in cases where the employee has exhausted their accrued sick leave. Substitution of vacation leave is at the employee's discretion.

Sick Leave

Schedule of Accrual

Employees accrue sick leave according to the following schedule:

Continuous Service	Accrued Sick Leave
0 - 120 months	4 hours per month
Over 120 months	12 hours per month

Sick Leave Donation

Full-time employees have the option to receive donated sick leave from any other eligible full-time employees when:

The employee who is receiving donated sick leave has a catastrophic qualifying illness or injury, for either themselves or a qualifying family member, which prevents them from working. Days may be requested for donation ONLY after the employee has exhausted all of the accrued paid leave and compensatory time to which the employee is otherwise entitled.

The employee who is receiving donated sick leave has been a full-time employee for a period of no less than 60 days and no more than 395 days.

The employee who is donating sick leave will maintain a balance of no less than 40 hours of accrued sick leave after their donation

The employee who is receiving donated sick leave shall not receive more than 240 hours (6 weeks) of donated sick leave per fiscal year. The employee who is donating sick leave shall not donate more than 40 hours in total of accrued sick leave to eligible employees per fiscal year (this total does not count towards the annual sick pool membership donation). Employees who are donating unused accrued sick leave to other eligible employees must submit a sick leave donation form to the Human Resource Department prior to donation eligibility determination; sick leave donation forms may be retrieved from the Human Resource Department. Upon eligibility determination, the Human Resource Department will notify each employee, and the Payroll Department (if approved), of the decision and amount of sick leave to transfer (if any).

Utilization

Accrued sick leave may be utilized by employees who are absent from work due to:

- Illness of the employee or the employee's spouse, children, parents or other
- Personal illness or physical or mental incapacity;
- Medical, dental, or optical examinations or treatments for the employee or the members of the immediate family who are dependent on the employee;
Pregnancy - Absences from work due to pregnancy;
- employee's spouse, children, parents or other members of the immediate family who are dependent on the employee;
- FMLA - according to County and Federal guidelines

Abuse of Sick Leave

Continuous abuse of sick leave (i.e. a Monday and/or a Friday) is cause for disciplinary action and may cause loss of paid sick leave benefits. Any misrepresentation as to the necessity or use of sick leave may result in immediate dismissal. If employees call in sick preceding or following a Holiday or scheduled day off, department heads should check sick leave records to determine if employee is abusing sick leave. If abuse is determined a medical certification may be requested. Abuse of leave could lead to termination of employment.

Accrual of Sick Leave

Accrued sick leave time begins with the first day of the month following the beginning date of regular, full-time, employment. **No sick leave time will accrue during a period of time covered by Long Term Disability or Worker's Compensation.** Sick leave is credited to the employee's account on the first of each month.

Maximum Accumulation

Employees hired prior to January 1, 2015, will be allowed to accumulate up to 720 hours of unused sick leave.

After January 1, 2015, should that balance drop below 480 hours that will be the maximum number of unused sick leave hours allowed for each employee.

For employees hired on or after January 1, 2015, the maximum allowable accumulation of unused sick leave is 480 hours.

Notification

The employee must notify his/her supervisor as soon as possible, prior to their scheduled work shift that he/she is unable to work. Sick pay benefits will be paid only for approved absences.

Expiration of Sick Leave

It is the responsibility of the employee to notify their Department Head or the Human Resources Department when they are off work with an illness or injury that may be long term. Failure to do so may result in termination.

Under some circumstances, employees may be eligible for additional paid sick leave from the "Sick Leave Pool." Please see Chapter 12 for further information.

Illness While on Vacation Leave

When an illness or physical incapacity occurs during the time an employee is on vacation leave, sick leave will be granted to cover the period of illness or incapacity and the charge against vacation leave reduced accordingly. A medical certificate or other acceptable evidence may be required by Taylor County prior to approval.

Cancellation Upon Separation/Termination

Unused sick leave is canceled upon separation/termination of employment without compensation to the employee.

Emergency/Funeral Leave

A maximum of 24 hours per year with pay will be allowed for emergency/funeral leave in the event of ***catastrophic illness of a member in the immediate family of an employee***, or for a ***funeral of a family member or friend***.

Immediate family includes the following; spouse, son, daughter, adopted child, foster child, grandchild, sister, brother, father, mother, grandparents, aunt, or uncle. Step and in-law relations shall be included for any of those listed above. All exceptions shall be approved by the employee's Department Head.

Emergency/funeral leave is credited to new employees at the time of hire. For other employees, emergency/funeral leave is credited on October 1st of each year. Emergency/funeral leave does not carry over. Absences in excess of 3 days will be charged to Vacation Leave, unless an exception is made by the Commissioners' Court.

Emergency/funeral leave cannot be used as an extension of sick or vacation leave. Any misrepresentation as to the necessity or use of emergency/funeral leave may result in immediate dismissal.

During the first six months of employment, Emergency/funeral leave may not be used unless approved in advance by the Department Head.

Citizenship Duty

Regular, full-time employees will be granted leave with pay for jury duty, for serving as a subpoenaed witness, and for the purpose of voting. Any *remuneration*/pay granted for jury will be retained by the employee.

Active Duty Leave

All full-time employees who are reservists called to active military duty during time of war shall be treated as those inducted or drafted into the United States military.

All full-time employees who are reservists, when called to active duty are entitled to return to employment in the position they had previously held or to a position of like seniority, status and pay. The employee must apply for re-employment

within ninety (90) days of receiving an honorable discharge or the equivalent. The returning employee must be qualified to perform the essential functions of the job of their previous position.

Taylor County is excused from this duty of re-employment if the circumstances have changed as to make the employee's re-employment impossible or unreasonable. If the returning employee is no longer qualified to perform the essential functions of their previous position due to a disability sustained during active duty but is qualified for another position, the new position will be offered to the employee. The new position will be as close to like seniority, status and pay as circumstances allow.

Under USERRA, employees who are re-employed may not be discharged for a period up to one year without cause, if the individual served in the Armed Forces for at least one hundred and eighty (180) days. In all other cases, employees on active duty are treated as if they were on "leave of absence".

Military Reservist Leave

Full-time employees who are active members of the Texas National Guard or any branch of reserve of the Armed Forces of the United States and can present copies of military orders to perform military duty during normal working hours are entitled to temporary military leave without loss of time or regular pay, for a period not to exceed fifteen (15) days per calendar year. Military leave in excess of 15 days will be charged to vacation leave or leave without pay.

All Leave Records

To be given paid leave in accordance with County policy, an employee must have leave time available (vacation, sick, and/or comp time) as evidenced by information supplied each pay period on payroll stubs or time sheets.

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CHAPTER 11

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT and MILITARY FAMILY LEAVE

The federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), as amended in 2009 and 2013, requires employers with 50 or more employees to provide eligible employees with unpaid leave. There are two types of leave available: (1) the basic 12-week Family and Medical Leave entitlement; and (2) the Military Family Leave entitlements described in this policy. The leave may be paid, unpaid, or a combination of paid and unpaid, depending on the circumstances of the leave and as specified in this Policy.

Family and Medical Leave

Employees are eligible for FMLA leave if they: 1) Have worked for the county for at least 12 months in the last 7 years; 2) Have worked at least 1,250 hours for the county during the 12 calendar months immediately preceding the request for leave; and 3) Are employed at a work site that has 50 or more employees within a 75-mile radius.

Employees with any questions about their eligibility for FMLA leave should contact the Human Resources Department for more information.

For FMLA, employees who meet the eligibility requirements described above are eligible to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for one of the following reasons: **1)** to care for the employee's son or daughter during the first 12 months following birth; **2)** to care for a child during the first 12 months following placement with the employee for adoption or foster care; **3)** to care for a spouse, child (under the age of 18 or if over age 18, incapable of self-care due to a disability), or parent ("covered relation") with a serious health condition; or **4)** because of the employee's own serious health condition that renders the employee unable to perform an essential function of his or her position.

If you are married and both work for Taylor County, then each of you together may take a combined total of 12 weeks' leave during any 12-month period for reasons, unless it is for your own serious health condition.

The twelve month period will be calculated on a rolling 12-month period measured backwards from the first day of approved FMLA leave. This calculation is to determine how much FMLA leave was already used in the previous 12-month period.

Military Family Leave

Under the MFL, there are three types of leave available: **1)** a qualifying exigency leave; **2)** leave to care for a covered service member; or **3)** to care for a covered veteran who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness and who was a member of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve, or National Guard).

Qualifying Exigency Leave

Eligible employees may be entitled to use up to 12 weeks of their FMLA leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Leave may be used if the employee's spouse, son, or daughter, in the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserves or National Guard) is on active duty or called to active duty status in a foreign country. Qualifying exigencies may include: **1)** short-notice deployment (up to 7 days of leave); **2)** attending certain military events and related activities; **3)** arranging for alternative childcare; **4)** addressing certain financial and legal arrangements; **5)** periods of rest and recuperation for the covered military member (up to 5 days of leave); **6)** attending certain counseling sessions; **7)** attending post-deployment activities (available for up to 90 days after the termination of the covered military member's active duty status); **8)** other activities arising out of the covered military member's active duty or call to active duty in a foreign country and agreed upon by the county and the employee; **9)** attending family support or assistance programs and informational briefings; **10)** to act as the covered military member's representative before a governmental agency; **11)** to address issues that arise from the death of a covered military member while on active duty status in a foreign country; **12)** other activities arising out of the covered military member's active duty or call to active duty in a foreign country and agreed upon by the county and employee.

Military Caregiver Leave

Eligible employees may take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. A covered service member is either a current member of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve or National Guard) or a veteran of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve, or National Guard).

An eligible employee may take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve, or National Guard) who has been rendered medically unfit to perform his or her duties due to a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty while on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

An eligible employee may take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a veteran (Regular, Reserve, or National Guard) who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness and who was a member of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve or National Guard) at any time during the period of 5 years preceding the date on which the veteran undergoes that medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy. This leave entitlement is applied on a per-injury basis such that an eligible employee may be entitled to take more than one period of 26 workweeks of leave if the leave is to care for different covered service members or covered veteran with a

subsequent serious illness or injury, except that no more than 26 workweeks may be taken within any single 12-month period.

Eligible employees may begin taking military caregiver leave up to five years after their family member was discharged or released from the military. The eligible employee's first date of leave must be within the five year period; however, the employee may continue to take such leave throughout the single 12-month period that is applicable to military caregiver leave, even if the leave extends beyond the five-year period.

An employee does not need to use this leave entitlement in one block. Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the employer's operations.

Intermittent Leave

Leave because of a serious health condition, or either type of Military Family leave may be taken intermittently (in separate blocks of time due to a single health condition) or on a reduced-schedule leave (reducing the usual number of hours worked per workweek or workday) if medically necessary.

Military leave due to qualifying exigencies may also be taken on an intermittent basis. If the leave is unpaid, the county will reduce the employee's salary based on the amount of time actually worked. In addition, while an employee is on an intermittent or reduced-schedule leave, the county may temporarily transfer the eligible employee to an available alternative position that better accommodates the recurring leave and which has equivalent pay and benefits.

Leave may not be taken on an intermittent basis when used to care for the employee's own child during the first year following birth, or to care for a child placed with the employee for foster care or adoption, unless both the employer and employee agree to such intermittent leave.

Substitution of Paid Leave

An employee who is taking FMLA or MFL leave must use all paid leave prior to being eligible for unpaid leave. Employees must follow the vacation and sick policy guidelines. Employees also must use all of their earned compensatory time for FMLA or MFL events prior to using accrued vacation or sick leave. After the balance of compensatory time and vacation and sick time is exhausted while on leave, the remainder of the Family Medical Leave will be taken as unpaid leave. FMLA and MFL run concurrently with all substituted paid leave, including Workers' Compensation leave.

Health Insurance Benefits

During an approved Family Medical Leave, the county will maintain the employee's health benefits as if the employee continued to be actively employed. If paid leave is substituted for unpaid family medical leave, the county will deduct the employee's portion of the health plan premium as a regular payroll deduction. If leave is unpaid, the employee must pay his or her portion of the premium through the Human Resources Department. An employee's healthcare coverage will cease if the employee's premium payment is more than 30 days late.

If the employee elects not to return to work at the end of the leave period, the employee will be required to reimburse the county for the cost of the premiums paid by the county for maintaining coverage during the unpaid leave, unless the employee cannot return to work because of a serious health condition or other circumstances beyond the employee's control.

During FMLA leave, the employer will maintain the employee's health coverage under any "group health plan" on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Use of FMLA leave will not result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of the employee's leave.

Return from FMLA Leave

Upon return from FMLA leave, eligible employees will be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms. An eligible employee is not guaranteed the actual job held prior to leave.

Providing Notice

If the need to use FMLA leave is foreseeable, the employee must give the county at least 30 days' prior notice of the need to take leave. When 30 days' notice is not possible, the employee must give notice as soon as practicable (within 1 or 2 business days of learning of the need for leave, except in extraordinary circumstances). Failure to provide such notice may be grounds for delaying the start of the FMLA leave.

Whenever possible, requests for FMLA leave should be submitted to the Human Resources Department. When submitting a request for leave, the employee must provide sufficient information for the county to determine if the leave might qualify as FMLA leave, and also provide information on the anticipated date when the leave would start, as well as the duration of the leave.

Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions; that a family member is unable to perform daily activities; that the employee or family member needs hospitalization or continuing treatment by a healthcare provider; or the circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must

inform the county if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified.

Employees also will be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

When an employee requests leave, Taylor County will inform the employee whether they are eligible under the FMLA or MFL. If the employee is eligible, the employee will be given a written notice that includes details on any additional information he or she will be required to provide. If the employee is not eligible, the county will provide the employee with a written notice indicating the reason for ineligibility. If leave will be designated as FMLA- or MFL-protected, the county will inform the employee in writing and provide information on the amount of leave that will be counted against the employee's 12 or 26 week entitlement.

If the employee is requesting leave because of the employee's own or a covered relation's serious health condition, the employee and the relevant healthcare provider must supply appropriate medical certification. Employees may obtain Medical Certification forms from the Human Resources Department. When the employee requests leave, the county will notify the employee of the requirement for medical certification and when it is due (no more than 15 calendar days after the employee requests leave).

If the employee provides at least 30 days' notice of medical leave, they should also provide the medical certification before leave begins. Failure to provide requested medical certification in a timely manner may result in denial of leave until it is provided. The county, at its expense, may require an examination by a second healthcare provider designated by the county, if it reasonably doubts the medical certification initially provided. If the second healthcare provider's opinion conflicts with the original medical certification, the county, at its expense, may require a third, mutually agreeable, healthcare provider to conduct an examination and provide a final and binding opinion.

The county may require subsequent medical recertification. Failure to provide requested certification within 15 calendar days, except in extraordinary circumstances, may result in the delay of further leave until it is provided.

If an employee takes leave because of the employee's own serious health condition or to care for a covered relation, the employee must contact the county each month regarding the status of the condition and his or her intention to return to work. In addition, the employee must give notice as soon as practicable (within 2 business days, if feasible) if the dates of the leave change, are extended, or were unknown initially.

CHAPTER 12

SICK LEAVE POOL

Purpose

The Taylor County Sick Leave Pool provides additional sick leave days to members of the pool in the event of a ***catastrophic FMLA-qualifying illness*** or injury that prevents a full time employee from working. Days may be requested from the pool ONLY after the employee has exhausted all the accrued paid leave and compensatory time to which the employee is otherwise entitled.

Pool Membership

- All regular full-time employees, with twelve (12) or more months of continuous employment with the county, are eligible to join the Sick Leave Pool. Yearly enrollment is conducted in January.
- Employees must contribute a minimum of one (1) day, up to a maximum of five (5) days accrued sick leave each year to begin membership.
- To maintain the Sick Leave Pool, all members must donate a minimum of one (1) day or a maximum of five (5) days of sick leave each January 1st.
- New employees must join the Pool within thirty (30) days after the first anniversary of their employment or during the regular enrollment period (January) after their first anniversary.
- Days donated to the sick pool will not reflect as “sick days used” on personnel attendance records.
- Membership enrollment forms must be submitted to the Human Resources Department. Days donated will be subtracted from each members accrued sick leave.
- “Days donated” become the property of the Taylor County Sick Leave Pool and cannot be returned in the event of membership cancellation.

Days Granted

- Days will be granted only for *catastrophic FMLA-qualifying illness* or surgery or other disability which necessitates an absence from work for five consecutive days or longer. Absences of less than five days may be approved to obtain treatment for a catastrophic illness, i.e. chemotherapy, dialysis.
- Pregnancy will not be covered by the Sick Leave Pool but complications due to the pregnancy or delivery will be considered.
- The Pool may be used only by sick pool members and their FMLA-qualified immediate family members (spouse, children, & parents) for FMLA-qualified illness, surgery, or disability.
- Days requested for stress related illness will be granted for hospitalized days only.
- The maximum number of days granted each year to an employee will not exceed the lesser of one-third of the total amount of time in the pool or 180 days
- Days will not be granted when an employee is receiving worker's compensation or long term disability benefits.

Application for Use

Applications for donation of accrued sick time to the Pool or applications for withdrawal or use of the pool are available in the Human Resources Department. Sick pool hours are not intended to be used for a physician appointment unless the appointment is related to the care for a catastrophic **FMLA-qualifying** illness or surgery.

- An eligible employee must apply to the Benefits Administrator for time to be granted from the Sick Leave Pool.
- The Benefits Administrator will present the application to the Sick Leave Pool Committee who will determine eligibility.
- If the employee is determined to be eligible, the administrator shall approve the transfer of time from the Pool to the employee. The time will be credited to the employee and shall be used in the same manner as accrued sick leave.
- An employee absent on sick leave assigned from the Pool is treated for all purposes as if the employee were absent on accrued sick leave.
- If a member is critically ill and unable to file an application for sick leave from the Pool, a family member may submit an application.

Sick Leave Pool Committee

The Sick Leave Pool Committee will be appointed by the Commissioners' Court for a two (2) year period. The Committee will be made up of the following members:

- A member of the Commissioners' Court
- An elected department head
- An appointed department head
- Human Resource Administrator
- Risk Manager
- A non-supervisory employee

The Sick Leave Pool Committee will have the final approval/disapproval of employee applications.

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CHAPTER 13

HOLIDAYS & SERVICE AWARDS

General

Holidays are set by the Commissioners' Court on a yearly basis.

Generally, a holiday that falls on Saturday will be observed on the preceding Friday and when a holiday falls on Sunday, County offices will be closed the following Monday.

Days off on Holiday – Modified schedules

Employees on a modified schedule (other than 8-5 Monday through Friday, excluding shift works detailed in the next section) whose regular day off falls on a holiday will be provided an alternate day off at the employee's choice of time, as long as there is not a scheduling conflict. The alternate day off must be within the same pay period, otherwise, the employee will be provided 8 hours of time paid additional to the hours work on the next pay check.

Holiday Pay – Shift Work

Shift Employees (jobs requiring 24/7 on a rotational basis) whose regular day off falls on a holiday will be provided 8 hours of time paid additional to the hours work on the next pay check. Shift Employees who are scheduled to work on a holiday will also be provided 8 hours of time paid additional to the hours work.

Part-time Employee Holiday Pay

Part-time employees who maintain employment on a regular basis and who have worked 20 days prior to the holiday, shall be paid for the number of hours that he/she would have normally worked on that day.

Temporary Employee Holiday Pay

Temporary employees are not eligible for paid holidays.

Leave of Absence

Holidays are not paid to an employee during an unpaid leave of absence.

Service Awards Program

Taylor County has established a service award program to recognize employees for their employment longevity. These employees will receive special recognition with the presentation of a certificate and service award pin based on the following policies.

Service Requirements

Service will be based on the number of years served as a full-time employee. Awards (pins and wall certificates) will be presented for each five (5) year interval of completed service.

If an employee who previously worked for Taylor County returns to employment, prior service will be included in the time needed for service awards. Prior service time does not count toward other benefit accruals such as vacation or sick leave.

Presentation Dates

The 15, 20, 25 and 30 awards will be presented each month during a Commissioners' Court meeting. The 5 and 10 year awards will be presented each month by the department head.

Employee Recognition Program

All Taylor County employees are public servants and custodians of the public trust. Public employees are trusted to provide good, efficient, economical county government. Taylor County is fortunate to have many dedicated employees who are also excellent public servants.

Often an employee's accomplishments or dedication is recognized only within their department. The purpose of the Employee Recognition Program is to recognize and acknowledge the outstanding for their contribution to county government. The Employee Recognition Program is also designed to communicate those contributions to the public, so that they too may recognize the high caliber of Taylor County employees.

Eligibility

Individuals must meet the following criteria to be nominated for an award:

- All non-elected employees of Taylor County are eligible.
- All full-time and part-time employees of Taylor County are eligible.
- Must have worked in their present position for a minimum of one year.
- Must not have received a quarterly or annual award in the previous year.

Criteria

- Continuous service within their department, exemplary attendance or high productivity.
- Employees who affect new programs or work methods within their department and throughout the County as a whole should be considered.
- Employees may also be nominated to acknowledge overall improvement or simply to show appreciation.
- The nominee(s) job performance should exceed the performance expected for their position or a specific objective, or assignment.
- The employee's job performance has set standards for excellence and efficiency in relation to the function of county government and in their department.

These are but a few of the possible examples of public service to be recognized by the Employee Recognition Program.

Design of the Program

The Employee Recognition Program divides Taylor County into three divisions: Government and Services, Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice.

Government and Services

Commissioners Road Crews
County Administration
County Auditor
County Clerk
County Treasurer
District Clerk
Domestic Relations
Elections
Environmental
Extension
Information Systems
Maintenance
Records Management
Social Services
Tax Assessor Collector
Veterans Service Office

Administration of Justice

County Courts at Law
District Attorney
District Courts
Justice of the Peace
Juvenile
Law Library

Law Enforcement

Constables
Crime Task Force
Jail
Sheriff

The nominations which are substantiated through meeting the eligibility criteria are then reviewed by the awards committee. One employee from each division will be selected to receive an Employee of the Quarter Award for the division.

At the end of each year, the award committee will then select one employee from each of the quarterly award winners to receive an Employee of the Year Award for their division.

Nominations will be accepted throughout the year for consideration for these awards.

Nomination

- Nomination forms are available in the Human Resources Department or from the Administrative Assistant to the Commissioners' Court.
- A form must be completed by the individual making the nomination.
- Nominations may be made by anyone (i.e., citizens, department heads, elected officials, supervisors and co-workers).
- A nominator may not nominate the same person more than once in a given award period.
- Nominations should be submitted during the last month of the quarter.
- Nominations should be turned into the Human Resources Department in a sealed envelope.
- Once the nomination is received, the chair of the award committee will review all nominations for compliance with criteria.
- Upon compliance certification, each individual nomination will be reviewed by the award committee.
- After selection, the awards will be presented in Commissioners' Court.

Award Committee

Members of the awards committee will be appointed by the County Judge.

The committee will be comprised of no more than seven members. There should be two representatives from each division and the chair. Membership should include representatives from management, supervision and employees.

Awards

Employees of the Quarter

Desk Plaque

Certificate of Appreciation

Employees of the Year

Wall Plaque

Certificate of Appreciation

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CHAPTER 14

DISCIPLINE

Cause for Disciplinary Action

Each Department Head has the responsibility for the management of their department's employees, including discipline. The following acts or standards of conduct may result in disciplinary action. This should NOT be taken as an exhaustive list nor should any statement in this policy be taken to indicate that Taylor County has a policy of progressive discipline.

- Violation of these personnel policies or any subsequent policy approved by the Commissioners' Court
- Falsification or dishonesty in any form, including falsification of county documents or records (including time sheets).
- Making maliciously false, vicious, profane statements towards Taylor County, any employee or citizen.
- *Insubordination* - failure or unwillingness to accept or recognize the authority of a superior. Also includes failure to follow the directions or procedures of their department or supervisor
- Absence without permission - including failure to notify a supervisor of sick leave, repeated tardiness or early departure
- Endanger the safety of other persons - through negligent or willful act(s). including the violation of county or departmental safety policies
- Consumption of alcohol, *intoxication*, illegal drug use or drug abuse while on duty
- Unauthorized use of public funds, or property or equipment - includes theft and misappropriation
- Destruction of government property or equipment through negligence or willful acts.
- Property theft of any type will not be tolerated by Taylor County. Property theft is considered to be the unauthorized use of county services, facilities or supplies or the taking of any county property for personal use. Also includes theft of other employee's property.

-
- Conviction of official misconduct
 - Conviction of a felony
 - Unauthorized use of official information or unauthorized disclosure of confidential information
 - Unauthorized or abusive use of official authority
 - Incompetence or neglect of duty
 - Disruptive behavior which impairs the performance of others (including excessive talking, interfering, etc.)
 - Use of abusive language
 - Falsification of application for employment records or false statements made during employment interviews.
 - Failure to report acts of sexual harassment, workplace violence or any other violation of these personnel policies.

Disciplinary Action

These suggested actions are offered to Department Heads and supervisors pertaining to disciplinary action. Nothing herein shall be construed to give an employee a cause of action for a wrongful discharge claim. Taylor County recognizes the right of a Department Head to discharge any employee at any time in accordance with the *Employment At Will Doctrine*. However, under no circumstances will an employee's constitutional rights be violated in the process. When disciplinary action is taken, it should be documented and signed by employee and supervisor or department head.

- VERBAL WARNINGS - with records of each warning maintained by supervisor. Records should include the date of the warning and a brief description of the cause for the warning.
- WRITTEN REPRIMANDS - Reprimand forms are available in the Human Resources Department, once completed, the Department Head must forward a copy to the Human Resources Department.
- DEMOTION - The Department Head may demote an employee for disciplinary reasons. This will result in a reduction in pay.
- SUSPENSION - From duty with or without pay for up to 10 working days.

Employees, who are exempt from the overtime protections of the Fair Labor Standards Act, when suspended without pay, will be suspended for one week periods.

- SEPARATION - By involuntary dismissal.

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CHAPTER 15

EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE POLICY

Employees who have a grievance should follow the chain of command, unless the grievance is against the immediate supervisor. If so, go to next person in the chain of command.

Employees who work for Department Heads who are appointed by a commission or board may bring a grievance to that board or commission. This includes employees who work for Department Heads appointed by the Commissioners' Court.

Employees who work for an Elected Official may bring a grievance to the Commissioners' Court. However, the final decision lies with the independently Elected Official under whose authority the department operates.

Grievance Procedures are for working employees who have a grievance concerning their employment. Therefore, grievance procedures are not applicable to terminated individuals.

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CHAPTER 16

SEPARATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Types of Separation

All separations from employment are designated as one of the following types:

Resignation

Employees are urged to give notice to their Department Head prior to resigning their position. Two weeks' notice is expected. Employees who do not give two weeks' notice to their Department Head are considered non-rehireable by the County. The two weeks' notice expectation is not required of Elected Officials.

Retirement

Employees who plan on retiring with the Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS) must submit their retirement resignation to the Human Resources Department in time for an application for retirement benefits to be received by the office of the TCERS, approximately two weeks prior to the date on which the retirement is to become effective.

The effective date specified in the application must be the last day of a calendar month.

Abandonment of Position

Failure of an employee to notify their Department Head or supervisor when they are absent from work for any period of time may result in suspension or termination of the employee. Absences for FMLA-qualifying reasons will be exempt from an abandonment of position charge.

Dismissal/Termination

All employees of the County are "*at-will*" employees, which means that they are not employees under an employment contract. The *Employment At Will Doctrine* simply means that either the employee or the employer can terminate the employment relationship for any legal reason or no reason and at any time, either with or without notice. Taylor County recognizes the right of a Department Head to discharge any employee at any time in accordance with the *Employment At Will Doctrine*. However, under no circumstances will an employee's constitutional rights be violated in the process.

Disability

An employee may be separated from employment for physical or mental reasons whenever he/she cannot perform the essential functions of the job and no reasonable accommodations can be made.

Death

If a county employee dies, his/her beneficiary or estate receives all earned pay and earned payable benefits.

Reduction in Force

An employee may be separated from employment when his/her position is abolished, or when there is either a lack of funds or lack of work.

Separation Procedures

The Department Head of an employee, whose employment with Taylor County is ending, shall provide written documentation, including reason for separation/termination. This information shall be sent by email, followed by a letter, to the Human Resource Department. In instances of involuntary dismissal, the Department Head must include information and documentation relating to the reasons for the termination. The former employee should be referred to the Human Resources Department to complete separation records.

Department Heads shall notify an employee who is leaving the county to return all county owned property, no later than the employee's separation date. This would include keys, equipment, credit cards, uniforms, etc.

Unemployment Benefits

When an employee leaves employment or is otherwise terminated, it is Taylor County's policy to contest the terminated employee's application for unemployment benefits.

The Human Resources Department is required to send an unemployment notice to the county's insurance carrier. Department Heads shall provide the Human Resource Department with written documentation by email, followed by a letter, indicating the last date the employee worked. This is necessary for filing the unemployment form to unemployment carrier.

In some circumstances, Taylor County may choose to grant an exception to this policy, upon approval of the Commissioners' Court.

CHAPTER 17

PERSONNEL FILES

General

Personnel files are maintained in the Human Resources Department for each county employee. The official record copy of all personnel information related to an employee shall be filed in the employee's personnel file.

Information in an employee's personnel file is confidential unless disclosure of specific items is requested or subpoenaed and disclosure is required by the Texas Open Records Act. No information from any record placed in an employee's file will be communicated to any person or organization, except the employee or the employee's department head, without proper written consent. Copies of items from a personnel file must be requested in writing at least 24 hours in advance.

An employee or his/her representative (must be designated in writing) may examine the employee's personnel file upon request during normal working hours in the Human Resources (HR) Office. Employees will not be allowed to remove the files from the HR Office.

Employees are expected to inform the Human Resources Department of any changes in or correction to information recorded in their individual personnel file such as home address, telephone number, person to be notified in case of emergency, or other pertinent information.

Workers' compensation records, medical records and injury reports are kept in a separate file in accordance with the Workers' Compensation Act, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Contents of Personnel File

Each employee's personnel file in the Human Resources Department may contain all or some of the following records:

- A copy of employee's application for employment
- Employee Data Form
- Deferred Compensation Records
- W-4 Form
- Performance Evaluation Records
- I-9 (Immigration Act Form)
- Drug Policy
- Public Information Act Form
- Records of any commendations, reprimands or other disciplinary action
- Termination / Separation Records

CHAPTER 18

Electronic Information and Communications Systems Acceptable Use Policy

General

This policy governs the use of the various *electronic information and communications systems* as they exist in Taylor County offices. These include but are not limited to: computers and other information systems and networks, facsimile machines, photocopiers and telephone systems. This policy affects past and current electronic information/communications systems as well as those which are incorporated into the system in the future.

Acceptable use and access to *electronic information and communications systems* owned or operated by Taylor County imposes certain responsibilities and obligations and is subject to County and departmental policies, in addition to local, state, and federal laws. This technology was obtained by Taylor County for Taylor County business purposes. All non-business use must not interfere with Taylor County business and must be approved by the employee's department head. Therefore, personal use is allowed, when authorized, as long as the use does not violate ANY part of County personnel policies. Consumable items used by employees for personal purposes shall be reimbursed to the County in a manner prescribed by the County Judge. Employees who use the various electronic systems and their contents for personal, non-county reasons, without approval, could be subject to discipline up to, and including discharge.

Ownership

Ownership of all *electronic systems and communications systems* such as computer files, programs (software), e-mail, voice-mail, faxes, photocopies, etc. rests with Taylor County. This includes the contents of an employee's computer, as well as documents produced and/or received with photocopiers, fax machines, information systems communications (*e-mail*) and telephone communications including *voice-mail*.

All passwords, codes, and *user ID's* are the property of Taylor County. No employee may use passwords, codes, and *user ID's* that are unknown to the Taylor County Information Systems Department.

Privacy Interests

Privacy interests do not exist with respect to employees or their use of *electronic information and communications systems*. The County reserves the right to monitor and access these communications, including the contents of any electronic system, for any legitimate county business reason. Employees should be aware that all passwords, codes, and *user ID's* will be overridden for any legitimate county business reason.

Sensitive information is not to be sent via *voice mail* or non-secure *e-mail*. The fact that *e-mail* and *voice mail* can be forwarded easily and accidentally means that private, sensitive, confidential or embarrassing information can be sent to or viewed by the wrong person. Information received by the wrong person can be embarrassing, cause harm, or violate the law; as well as ethical considerations. *E-mail* and *voice mail* messages are discoverable and have been used as evidence in lawsuits, as well as in criminal procedures.

Zero Tolerance

Taylor County has zero tolerance for offensive messages and/or jokes, such as those including racial, religious or sexual slurs or comments of a harassing or threatening nature, including those communicated through County *electronic information and communications systems*. Such messages and/or jokes disrupt an office, may cause harm to fellow employees and subject the County to legal liability or defamation.

If any employee witnesses or knows of any such happenings, you are obligated to report it to your Department Head or the Information Systems Office.

Information Systems Acceptable Use

In making acceptable use of information systems you must:

- Protect your *user ID* and workstation from unauthorized use. You are responsible for all activities conducted with your *user ID* or that originate from your workstation.
- Access only the files, data and programs to which you have been given authorized access or that are publicly available.
- Use only legal versions of copyrighted software in compliance with vendor license requirements.

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- Use only software provided or approved by Taylor County Information System's office. The use of software not provided by the Information Systems office must be approved in writing from the Information Systems office or the Commissioners' Court.
 - Be considerate in your use of shared resources. Refrain from monopolizing computers, overloading networks with excessive data, or wasting computer time, connect time, disk space, printer paper, manuals, or other resources.
 - Protect your workstation by securing or logging off according to departmental policy and program requirements when you are leaving your workstation. [recommended for absences of five (5) minutes or more]
 - Employees are expected to listen to and respond to their messages within an acceptable time frame. The purpose of our electronic information/communications systems is to increase productivity; reducing time wasted with telephone tag and lost memos.

Information Systems Non Acceptable Use

In making acceptable use of information systems you must **NOT**:

- Use another person's *user ID* or password.
- Use another person's workstation, files, or data in conflict with departmental policy or without permission.
- Use computer programs to decode passwords or access control information.
- Attempt to circumvent or subvert either system or network security.
- Engage in any activity that might be harmful to systems or to any information stored thereon, such as creating or propagating viruses, disrupting services, or damaging files.
- Use information systems for commercial or partisan political purposes, such as using electronic mail to circulate advertising for products or for political candidates.
- Access internet sites whose topics include sex, hatred, violence, pornography or whose goals are to promote these behaviors.
- Make or use illegal copies of copyrighted software in violation of laws or statutes, or store such copies on County information systems, or transmit them over County networks

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- Use computer programs to send any information that is considered protected health information or (PHI), under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Privacy Act (HIPAA)
 - Use the County's information systems or networks for personal gain; by selling access through your *user* ID or by performing work for profit with County resources

Exception

The private practice of law by assistant district attorneys has been approved by the Commissioners' Court and is an exception to this policy as it applies to using the County's information systems for personal gain and/or personal business. This exception applies as long as the practice is approved by the District Attorney and does not result in any financial loss to Taylor County. Example: Taylor County must be reimbursed for any use of paper or materials, or long distance telephone charges, etc.

Social Networking Media

The purpose of this policy is to address the use of Social Networking Media by employees of Taylor County. Social Networking Media, for the purpose of this policy, refers to all means of communicating or posting information or content of any type on the Intranet or Internet, including to an employee's own or someone else's Web log or blog, journal or diary, personal Web site, social networking, or affinity web site, Web bulletin board, or in an on-line chat room.

It is the policy of Taylor County that employees shall refrain from participating in social media while on duty, and/or on County provided electronic equipment, except in limited situations where such activity is authorized by the Computer Steering Committee and is work-related. Unauthorized social media activity conducted while on-duty and/or on County provided electronic equipment is a violation of the Electronic Information and Communications Systems Acceptable Use Policy. Employees are also prohibited from using a county e-mail address to register on social networks, blogs, or other online promotions or tools utilized for personal use.

Taylor County recognizes that employees may choose to participate in social media activities when off-duty, and in no way seeks to limit an employee's use of social media on their own time; however, employees should ensure that their off-duty social media activity does not interfere with their work for Taylor County or with their workplace relationships.

Per Texas Senate Bill 1893, effective August 1, 2023, the installation or use of social media service TikTok or any successor application or service developed or provided by ByteDance Limited or an entity owned by ByteDance Limited; or a social media application or service specified by proclamation of the governor is prohibited on any device owned or leased by the County except for providing law enforcement.

Employees should not post information, photographs, video, or audio of co-workers, clients, customers, and vendors of the County without first obtaining their approval. For example, posting information regarding a co-worker's work performance, medical information, or personal relationships could cause conflict in the workplace and is prohibited. Be respectful, fair, and honest when using social media and refrain from posting any false information or rumors about co-workers, clients, customers, and vendors of the County.

Keep in mind that such activity, even if conducted while off-duty, could affect the work environment and be a violation of numerous Taylor County policies.

Employees who violate any county policy may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

Under no circumstances should an employee represent themselves as an official spokesperson or representative of Taylor County or any County department or office without the express written approval of Commissioners' Court or the subject office's Elected Official. If an employee does post any information concerning Taylor County, they must include a disclaimer indicating the posting is their own opinion and they are not an authorized representative of Taylor County.

Employees are prohibited from disclosing any information obtained in the course of their employment that is confidential, personal, or private. Violations of copyright laws and restrictions and privacy policies are prohibited.

Ultimately, employees are responsible for their own social networking media activity and are solely responsible for any liability created by posting any defamatory or untruthful information about another individual or organization.

Any violation of this policy, including activity which occurs outside the workplace, is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment. Employees who have any questions about this policy, or are unsure about the content of a social networking media activity, should discuss their concerns with a supervisor, manager, or the Information Systems Department.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)

The purpose of this document is to outline Taylor Counties Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy.

This policy applies to any individual or party accessing the protected Taylor County network or data

Only devices supplied by the IT Department may connect to or access the protected County network and its resources. Personal cell phones may be used to access county email. No other personal device of any kind may connect to the protected County network or access County resources.

The County owns its data and resources; and as such the County reserves the right to actively monitor, access, view, or revoke use of County owned information at any time up to and including deletion of data on a user's device if it perceives a valid reason or threat to do so.

Employees are responsible for adhering to this policy and any violation of this policy is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment. Employees who have any questions regarding this policy should discuss their concerns with their Department Head, immediate Supervisor, or a member of the Information Systems Department.

On-line Auctions

It is the policy of Taylor County that employees shall refrain from participating in on-line auctions while on duty, and/or on County provided electronic equipment, except in limited situations where such activity is authorized by the Computer Steering Committee and work related. Unauthorized on-line auction activity conducted while on-duty and/or on County provided electronic equipment is a violation of the Electronic Information and Communications Systems Acceptable Use Policy. Employees are also prohibited from using a county e-mail address to register on on-line auctions utilized for personal use.

Any violation of this policy is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment. Employees who have any questions about this policy, or are unsure about the content of an on-line auction, should discuss their concerns with a supervisor, manager, or Information Systems Department

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CHAPTER 19

HEALTH & SAFETY

Workplace Violence

It is Taylor County's policy to promote a safe environment for its employees. The County is committed to working with its employees to maintain a work environment free from violence, threats of violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior. Taylor County will not tolerate such acts when directed at an employee. Neither will Taylor County tolerate an act of workplace violence committed by an employee toward a citizen or co-worker.

Violence, threats, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior in our workplace will not be tolerated. All reports of incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with appropriately. Such behavior can include oral or written statements, gestures or expressions that communicate a direct or indirect threat of physical harm. Individuals who commit such acts may be removed from the premises and may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination and criminal penalties.

Acts of workplace violence include acts of family violence.

Weapons, and other dangerous or hazardous devices or substances are prohibited from the premises without proper authorization. License to carry are required for those employees to bring a handgun onto Taylor County property.

The entire Taylor County Courthouse and other areas on Taylor County premises have been designated as offices utilized by the court as described by Chapter 46.03(a)(3) of the Texas Penal Code. For this reason handguns will not be allowed inside the courthouse and the other designated areas unless otherwise authorized by law. A "license to carry" is **not** an exception to this provision.

See section below of policy on **Possession of Guns by County Employees on County Premises**.

Your cooperation is required to implement this policy and to maintain a safe working environment. Do not ignore violent, threatening, harassing, intimidating, or other disruptive behavior. If you observe or experience such behavior by anyone on county property, whether he or she is a county employee or not, report it immediately to your supervisor or Department Head and Risk Manager. Failure to report these described behaviors or a related situation is a violation of the County's personnel policies.

The Risk Manager may seek advice from the Sheriff's Department [or the Human Resources Department] regarding investigating the incident and initiating appropriate action.

PLEASE NOTE: Threats or assaults that require immediate attention by law enforcement should be reported first to the Sheriff's Department, any D. A. Investigator or to Police at 911.

Possession of Guns by County Employees on County Premises

Excluding the courthouse and the other designated areas (as previously described), it is the policy of Taylor County to allow each Department Head (Elected or Appointed) to determine whether or not an employee that is licensed to carry **will be allowed** to carry a weapon within their department of Taylor County. If employees are allowed under this policy to carry a handgun, each Department Head will be required to maintain a copy of their employee's license to carry on file and provide a copy to the County Judge and a copy to Human Resource to put in their personnel file.

Those employees authorized to carry must comply with the restrictions that are found in Texas Penal Code 46.03 and 46.035.

Be advised that although Taylor County policy permits employees who are licensed to carry a handgun to do so, if permitted by a Department Head, it is

also the policy of Taylor County that those permitted weapons should not be brandished, displayed, or removed from their holster by the employee unless the employee reasonably believes that the use or display of the weapon is immediately necessary to protect the employee against another person's use or attempted use of unlawful deadly force or to prevent the other person from committing an aggravated kidnapping, murder, sexual assault, robbery, or aggravated robbery.

In addition, it is the employee's responsibility to notify their Department Head and County Judge in the event the employee is involved in a gun-related incident or if the employee no longer possesses a lawful license to carry.

Any violation of this provision shall result in immediate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Safety Policy

It is the policy of Taylor County to ensure adequate provision is made for the safety and health of all employees and other users of County facilities and that appropriate risk management and loss control strategies are employed.

The Risk Manager is responsible for overseeing the assignment of responsibilities for an effective safety and health program. Specific goals will be established to ensure that all personnel are made aware of safety standards and procedures. This will be accomplished through safety meetings, safety training, safety inspections, accident investigations and any corrective actions that may be necessary to ensure safe working conditions.

This policy maintains safety as a standard of conduct required of all county employees. The overall success of the safety and health program requires the participation and support of all employees. Note that violations of a standard of conduct, including safety, may result in disciplinary action, including termination.

Each employee must share in following safety and health procedures and practices. By following safety and health procedures and reporting unsafe practices you can help prevent accidents and losses for a better Taylor County.

Cell Phone Usage While Operating a Motor Propelled Vehicle

County cell phones are provided to improve customer service, responsiveness, and to enhance efficiency. Cell phones are not a personal benefit and should not be used as a primary mode of personal communication. **Using a cell phone while operating a county vehicle is strongly discouraged.** Employees should plan to allow placement of calls prior to driving or while on rest breaks. When an employee must use their cell phone, while driving, they should keep conversations brief, avoid unnecessary calls, and no calls should be made if driving is hazardous. If it is necessary for the employee to read or write while taking the call, the employee must pull off the road and come to a complete stop. All employees should take time to become familiar with the various cell phone functions. The cell phone should be placed where it is easy to see and reach. Employees should bear in mind that cell phone calls can be intercepted and should take proper precautions when discussing confidential information.

Commercial Drivers License (CDL): Any County Employee operating a vehicle in excess of 10,001 GWR, is prohibited from use of cell phones while that vehicle is in operation (moving). Receiving or making phone calls or text messages is

permissible only when the operator has pulled off the proper roadway and brought that equipment to a complete stop.

Effective January 26, 2010, the United States Department of Transportation placed a ban on texting for CDL Drivers. This includes any driver of a vehicle over 10,001 GWR. The fine is \$2,750 for the first offense, second offense is fine plus 60 day loss of CDL and third offense is fine plus 120 day loss of CDL. Taylor County will not be responsible for any employee violations associated with this law. Employees who are cited for such violations will be subject to disciplinary action or dismissal.

Texas Hazard Communication Policy

Taylor County complies with the Texas Hazard Communication Act of 1985, Texas Civil Statutes Article 518, 2b, by compiling a hazardous chemicals list, by using MSDS sheets, by ensuring that containers are labeled, and by providing employees with training.

This program applies to all work areas and operations in our county where employees may be exposed to hazardous substances under normal working conditions or during an emergency situation.

The County's Risk Manager, is the Texas Hazard Communication Policy coordinator. The Risk Manager acts as the representative of the Taylor County Commissioners' Court, who has over-all responsibility for the program. The Risk Manager will review and update the program and records as necessary. Copies of the written program may be obtained in the County Risk Manager's Office.

Under this program, employees will be informed of the contents of the Hazard Communication Standard, the hazardous properties of chemicals with which they work and safe handling procedures and measures to take to protect themselves from these chemicals. Employees will also be informed of the hazards associated with non-routine tasks.

Employee Responsibility

Employees are responsible for conducting their work activities in a manner that is protective of their own health and safety, as well as that of other employees. An accident, no matter how minor, must be reported immediately to an employee's supervisor and the Risk Manager. **Appendix B-1** – Accident/Incident Reporting and Investigation Form)

Employee Suggestions

Employees shall report immediately to their supervisor any conditions that in their judgment threaten the health and safety of employees or the public. Employees are encouraged to make suggestions to their supervisors of improvements that would make the County work place safer and healthier. Employees may speak to the Risk Manager or any member of the Loss Prevention Committee.

On - The - Job Injuries

Employees shall report to their Department Head or supervisor, **all job-related illnesses and injuries at the time they occur**, no matter how minor the injury or illness appears. If the job-related illness or injury is not reported within seven (7) days, our Worker's Compensation provider may deny the claim. It is the responsibility of the workers compensation insurance carrier to determine if benefits are allowable. A Department Head of an injured employee shall notify Risk Manager/Human Resources when an employee seeks medical attention for a work related injury or illness. Failure to provide notification Risk Manager/Human Resources may result in rejection of the claim, placing the health care expense solely onto the employee. The county has seven (7) days to report the claim to the insurance provider. See **Appendix B-2 – Work Related Injury Report**.

Inclement Weather

The County Judge or his designee may close county offices due to inclement or bad weather. All current closing information will be immediately posted to the Taylor County official website (www.TaylorCountyTexas.org). Usually, inclement weather which requires the closing of county offices will be icy or frozen roadways. Other circumstances could include tornado warnings or thunderstorms with severe damage potential.

The unscheduled closing of county offices adversely impacts the citizenry. The decision to close county offices will not be taken lightly and will not occur frequently. Certainly, there will be times when the county offices are open during inclement weather. The commute to and from work is dangerous, to some degree, even during good driving conditions. Employees are responsible for their own safety when commuting to work. This policy does not extend the county's liability to those accidents which occur during employee's commute during good or poor driving conditions.

At times, inclement weather may occur during the evening and nighttime hours. The County Judge or his designee will determine whether county offices will open on time or delay opening. Notification will be given to the local media for broadcast. In these instances, the employee's time sheet will reflect the employees regularly scheduled work hours.

Most frequent are instances where the decision to close county offices is made during the business day. These decisions will be made by the County Judge or his designee. In these instances, the hours should be recorded on the employee's time sheet in the "other" column. A notation should be made that the time was due to inclement weather.

When the county offices are closed for part or all of a day, the employees who are already off work on accrued leave (vacation, sick, emergency or compensatory time) should not be adversely affected. These employees will have their time sheets corrected to reflect the hours in the "other" column instead of the use of accrued leave.

There may be occasions when an Elected Official chooses to close their offices at a time when the County Judge has not closed all county offices. Additionally, an Elected Official may choose to release a portion of their employees. The individual Elected Official will determine which employees are affected. On these occasions, the employee's time sheet should reflect the hours absent from work as vacation time.

County law enforcement services should not be interrupted during times of inclement weather. Inclement weather actually increases the need for public safety services. Road crews may also be required to work for public safety purposes. Changes made in work schedules for these departments (Sheriff, Jail, Constable, Juvenile Detention, Road Crews) will be made by the department's Elected Official. Non-essential personnel in those offices may be released as conditions and need indicate.

Emergency personnel, such as dispatchers or scheduled law enforcement are required to work their normal shift during inclement weather when other county offices are closed. These employees will be paid their regular hours.

In all instances, it should be noted on the time sheet that the absence from work was due to inclement weather.

Bomb Threat Procedures

See **Appendix C** for Sheriff's Office Policy and Procedures.

Tornado Procedures

Severe thunderstorms can cause tornadoes with little or no warning. The Taylor County Sheriff's department personnel will usually receive the first word about an impending tornado through their communications system. The Sheriff, County

Judge or their designee will make the decision to go to shelter. Seldom will there be time to safely evacuate the building; being in a motorized vehicle is very unsafe. Common sense and accepted practices suggest that moving to the inner most part of a building is the safest place. The locations should be structurally sound and free of glass.

Each Department Head (or designee) will ensure that their personnel and/or the offices on their floor have assembled in their appropriate Assembly Area or have been evacuated.

With these facts in mind, Department Heads will ensure that locations of assembly areas and/or evacuation routes are posted within their office

See **Appendix D** for referenced Assembly Areas and Locations.

Law Enforcement Center

In the event of a tornado watch, the Sheriff's office will usually have first warning and will notify the County Judge. The Sheriff's Office will notify the Domestic Relations Office. Individuals in the Law Enforcement Center should evacuate to the inner most part of the Sheriff's offices.

After receiving notification from the Sheriff's Office, the County Judge's Office will notify all Taylor County facilities.

Juvenile and Adult Detention

After receiving notification, individuals in these facilities should follow the promulgated procedures according to the individual department's policy.

Fire Evacuation

In the event of a fire, all employees and citizens should evacuate the building according to the following fire evacuation procedures. Employees are responsible for reviewing and following the below listed procedure:

- All employees should evacuate the building in the quickest manner possible
- Employees and public will use the nearest exit.
- Employees should help those individuals evacuate, who are in need of assistance.
- Employees shall not use elevators and must direct all citizens to stairwells.

Each Department Head (or designee) will ensure that their personnel and/or the offices on their floor have been evacuated.

CHAPTER 20

COUNTY VEHICLES

County vehicles are provided to departments and specific employees based upon county business necessity. **County vehicles are to be used SOLELY for county business purposes and for transportation to and from county work sites. County vehicles are not provided to officials or employees to be used for private or personal use.** Misuse or abuse of this privilege may result in immediate termination or other disciplinary actions. An employee's continued misuse may result in removal of the vehicle from the department's inventory or control. All those who drive county vehicles should be careful to avoid even the hint of impropriety in the operation and care of county vehicles. If a Department Head, Elected Official, or employee wishes to have a citizen "ride along" in a county-owned vehicle, a Ride-Along Release form (obtained from the Human Resources Office) must first be completed.

Defensive Driving and other Safety Precautions

Whether an employee is operating a vehicle on county business or personal business, good defensive driving techniques should be used. The National Safety Council defines defensive driving as "driving to save lives, time and money in spite of the condition around you AND the actions of others."

Appropriate use of vehicle safety devices such as; turn signals, hazard lights, horn, and mirrors is strongly encouraged. Seat Belt usage is mandatory.

Drivers may come in contact with a growing phenomenon of the so called "road rage". Employees who encounter drivers who exhibit road rage should get their vehicle away from the other driver as quick and safely as possible. Road rage can lead to not only dangerous physical confrontations, but it also jeopardizes the total driving environment. Driving courteously and defensively ensures safe vehicle use for everyone.

Seat Belt Use Policy

This policy is mandatory for all county employees operating motor vehicles and visitors riding on county-owned vehicles

This includes all county employees operating county-owned vehicles, passengers in county-owned vehicles, and all employees operating personal vehicles while engaged in county business, and employees riding as a passenger in a vehicle while on county business.

All county-owned vehicles will be equipped with seat belts. This includes the vehicle cab or operator's compartment, passenger seating area and jump seats.

Operators of tractors or other off-road vehicles equipped with "Roll-Over Protection Structures" (ROPS) will use seat belts.

Vehicle passengers will be permitted to ride only in areas of the vehicle designed for that purpose. Seat belts shall be used by all employees riding in a vehicle while the vehicle is in motion. There are no vehicle exemptions to this policy.

Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action by the department head. Employees who have a medical condition which may preclude wearing a seat belt may carry a physician's note indicating a waiver for medical reasons.

Accidents

All accidents or incidents involving a motor vehicle, which occur in the performance of the employee's job, must be reported to the office of the County Risk Manager. **All accidents must be reported, both at-fault and no-fault.** An employee in control of a motor vehicle or special mobile equipment, as defined in Chapter 541.201 (18) of the Transportation Code, at the time of an at-fault accident is required to take a drug/alcohol test as soon as immediately possible after the accident has occurred. An employee in control of a motor vehicle or special mobile equipment as defined in Chapter 541.201 (18) of the Transportation Code at the time of a no-fault accident (such as an animal strike) may be subject to take a drug/alcohol test as soon as immediately possible after the accident has occurred. Because every accident has different circumstances, the Department Head/Elected Official reserves the right to make the final determination whether a test should be administered. The employee and their supervisor must complete a **Taylor County Accident Investigation and Reporting Form** and a **Taylor County Injury Report Form** (if the employee is injured). This report should also include a copy of the law enforcement officer's report (if available). All citations received by an employee while performing their job must also be reported. See **Appendix B-1 for Accident and Incident Report forms.**

Vehicle Use Policy

To reduce motorized vehicle accidents by hiring qualified drivers with good driving records and to maintain safe driving habits. Driver's license records provide important information which reveals driver characteristics. These are reliable indicators of future probability of loss.

This policy shall apply to all applicants for employment with Taylor County and all current employees whose essential job functions require the daily use of a motorized vehicle in the performance of those job functions.

Although this policy prescribes a course of action, there are incidents involving a motor vehicle which exceed the scope of this policy. Such as motor vehicle accidents or incidents involving a fatality or the trafficking of illegal drugs, DWI, etc. In these types of incidents the Commissioners' Court, in consultation with the Elected Official or Department Head, shall have ultimate authority for dispensation of this policy.

Pre-employment

During the interview process for a position covered under this policy, the Department Head, or their designee shall ask the top applicant(s) about their driving record. The Department Head's questions should relate to the criteria listed below. If it appears that the applicant does not meet one or more of the criteria, then a conditional offer for employment can be made. The applicant should be informed that their driver's record will be checked subsequent to the hiring decision and if the record indicates that misrepresentations were made or that one or more of the criteria have been met, then the conditional employment relationship will be terminated.

Upon acceptance of the conditional offer of employment, the Department Head, or their designee shall have applicant complete a Taylor County Disclosure and Release Form (Appendix E) and send to Human Resources before the Risk Manager can obtain a copy of the applicant's driver's license record. The information contained on the driver's license record will be compared to the criteria listed below. If an applicant meets one or more of the criteria, then the employment relationship will then be terminated.

This section of the policy applies to current employee promotions and transfers when the promotion or transfer is to a position covered by this policy.

An individual cannot be hired if the MVR comes back negative for any of the following reasons:

- More than two convictions of moving violations within the current twenty-four months.
- Conviction of driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs or driving while impaired within the past five years.
- Current license suspended, invalid, or revoked.
- Two chargeable (cited) accidents within the current twenty-four months.
- Conviction of a particular serious violation.
- Motor vehicle related conduct or convictions that may indicate poor or questionable judgment beyond most recent twenty-four month period.

Current Employees

Department Heads who have employees covered by this policy, may have the county Risk Manager conduct an investigation into an employee's driver's record with reasonable cause and conduct any necessary disciplinary proceeding, up to and including reassignment or termination. The Department Head, at their discretion, may require the employee to attend an approved defensive driving course within thirty days.

Motor Vehicle Inscription Requirement

Department Heads or Elected Officials in whose department a county motor vehicle or piece of heavy equipment is assigned, must have an inscription printed on each side of the vehicle or equipment that includes the words "Taylor County" and the title of the department. The inscription must be in a color sufficiently different from the body of the vehicle or equipment so that the lettering is plainly legible. The title of the department must be in letters plainly legible at a distance of not less than 100 feet. §721.004 Texas Transportation Code. Exemptions may be granted by the Commissioners' Court under certain circumstances, pursuant to §721.005 Texas Transportation Code.

CHAPTER 21

PURCHASING POLICIES

Taylor County is a public entity which is supported by tax dollars it is very important that all officials and employees comply with the purchasing policy. No one should conduct County business in any manner that would bring the slightest hint of impropriety. All departments must follow Taylor County purchasing policy and are strongly encouraged to make all purchases through the Purchasing Department.

General Items

The following items must be purchased through the Purchasing Department:

Office Supplies, Furniture	Vehicles
Road & Bridge Equipment, Machines	Computer Equipment and
Maintenance service contracts	Supplies
Buildings & land	Telephones - cellular and office
Insurance	Plumbing Services
Tools	Road materials
Culverts	Signs: traffic & building
Electricity	Fuel & fuel cards
Electrical Services	Engineering & Architect Services

It is recommended that all other items not mentioned, be procured through the Purchasing Department.

Items under Contract

Office Supplies	Copiers
Road materials	Long distance service
Cellular phones and accessories	Local phone service
Vehicle repairs	Insurance
Computer accessories	Vehicles
Fuel and fuel cards	Banking

Contracts are obtained because expenditures are over \$100,000.00 per year. These items are placed out on competitive bid/proposal or purchased through Purchasing Cooperatives. The County saves money when using these contracts. The Auditor Office and Purchasing Department strongly recommend using these contracts.

All Contracts are to be approved by the Commissioners' Court. No one can enter a contract with a vendor without the Courts approval.

Budget Restraints

Employees may not purchase any materials, equipment, etc. without money available in that particular department's budgeted line item and approved by Commissioners' Court for that particular expense during budget. Current budget amounts may be obtained from the Auditor's Office. Requests to change budgeted amounts or items budgeted for purchase must be approved by the Commissioners' Court prior to the purchase. Requests for budget transfers or budget adjustments must be made in writing to the County Auditor.

Purchasing Authorization

A county employee, department head or elected official who purchases or orders any items or services in the name of Taylor County without following the purchasing policies and procedures shall be personally responsible for payment to the vendor or for return of the items.

Statutory Purchasing - Purchases over \$100,000 - REQUIRED

Before a county employee may purchase or otherwise acquire one or more items under a contract that will require an expenditure exceeding \$100,000, the Commissioner's Court must comply with the competitive bidding or competitive proposal procedure set out in Title 8, Section 262.023 of the Local Government Code. All items exceeding \$100,000.00 must be bid or purchased from a Cooperative purchasing contract generated from the Purchasing Department.

Sequential or Component Purchasing

All separate, sequential, or component purchases of items ordered or purchased, with the intent of avoiding the competitive bidding statutes is forbidden. Entering into a "lease purchase" to avoid the \$100,000 threshold is also forbidden.

Criminal Penalty (Local Govt. Code 262.034)

A county officer or employee commits an offense if the officer or employee knowingly or intentionally makes or authorizes separate, sequential or component purchases to avoid the competitive bidding requirements of Section 262.023. An offense under this subsection is a Class B misdemeanor.

Non Statutory Purchasing - Purchases under \$100,000

In order to keep expenses down and to ensure that the County receives the best prices for goods and services, all items should be purchased through the Purchasing Department. Bulk purchasing, alternate vendors, use of state and federal contracts are a few examples of methods the purchasing department uses to get the best products at the best value.

- Any purchase under \$5,000.00 requires no quotation if the Purchasing Agent considers the price to be reasonable based on research, experience, and purchase history. Purchase Orders may be issued at the discretion of the Purchasing Agent.
- Any purchase of \$5,000.00 to \$25,000.00 requires a minimum of two (2) telephone quotations. Records of these quotes must be kept in the Purchasing Department. A Purchase Order must be issued by the Purchasing Agent and kept on file.
- Any purchase \$25,000.01 to \$99,999.99 require either a minimum of two (2) written quotations, or purchased from a cooperative contract, or competitive bidding, the method used shall be at the discretion of the Purchasing Agent. A Purchase Order must be issued and records must be kept in the Purchasing Department.

Maintenance Service Agreements

The Purchasing Department may elect to purchase maintenance agreements for some types of equipment. Departments should contact the Purchasing Department to coordinate maintenance service needs and for record keeping purposes.

Conflict of Interest

The county will not enter into any contract to purchase any item from an elected county official or an employee or with any relatives of an elected official or employee. The county will not do business with an elected county official or employee acting as an individual, partner, sole proprietor, or officer or director of any firm.

Gifts and Gratuities

Taylor County prohibits the acceptance by any of its employees of gifts, either in kind or in money, from a vendor or potential vendor. Gifts would include any items offered to an employee or an employee's immediate family which are obviously not in the nature of advertising. It is not intended that this restriction include the bona fide business lunch, or the candy, nuts, etc. at Christmas time. However, caution should be taken that no impression is given that such lunches, candy, etc. are a requirement to do business with Taylor County.

Personal Purchases

County employees are not allowed to purchase supplies, materials, or equipment for personal use through Taylor County or the Purchasing Department.

Purchases Using Grant Funds Awarded from State Agencies

- A. Application of Policy This policy applies to contracts for purchases, services, and construction or repair work funded with state financial assistance (direct or reimbursed) which includes, but is not limited to, direct grants, and loans. The requirements of this Policy also apply to any sub recipient of the funds. All state funded projects, loans, grants, and sub-grants, whether funded in part or wholly, are subject to the Texas Grant Management Standards (TxGMS), Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for state awards outlined in the TxGMS unless otherwise directed in writing by the state federal agency or state pass-through agency that awarded the funds. The use of grant funds are also subject to any additional provisions required by the grantor agency, as directed in the grant award/ agreement.
- B. Compliance with State Law All procurement activities involving the expenditure of state funds must be conducted in compliance with the TxGMS unless otherwise directed in writing by the state agency or state pass-through agency that awarded the funds. Taylor County will follow all applicable local and state procurement requirements when expending state funds. Should Taylor County have more stringent requirements, the most restrictive requirement shall apply so long as it is consistent with state law.

Purchases Using Grant Funds Awarded from Federal Agencies

- A. Application of Policy This policy applies to contracts for purchases, services, and construction or repair work funded with federal financial assistance (direct or reimbursed) which includes, but is not limited to, direct grants, USDA grants and loans, CDBG funds, FEMA disaster assistance grants, and the Highway Planning, Research, and Construction Program. The requirements of this Policy also apply to any sub recipient of the funds. All federally funded projects, loans, grants, and sub-grants, whether funded in part or wholly, are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for federal awards (Uniform Guidance) codified at 2 C.F.R. Part 200 unless otherwise directed in writing by the federal agency or state pass-through agency that awarded the funds. The use of grant funds are also subject to any additional provisions required by the grantor agency, as directed in the grant award/agreement.
- B. Compliance with Federal Law All procurement activities involving the expenditure of federal funds must be conducted in compliance with the Procurement Standards codified in 2 C.F.R. §200.317 through §200-326 unless otherwise directed in writing by the federal agency or state pass-through agency that awarded the funds. Taylor County will follow all applicable local, state, and federal procurement requirements when expending federal funds. Should Taylor County have more stringent requirements, the most restrictive requirement shall apply so long as it is consistent with state and federal law.

Departments issued Federal and State Grant funds should work closely with the Auditor's Office and Purchasing Department to ensure proper procedures are followed.

Disposal of Surplus

Occasionally, a department will have certain items of property or equipment that it does not need or can not be used or repaired. If the property can not be transferred to another department for its use, the property will be turned over to the Purchasing Department. At this point, the department should notify the Purchasing Department of the transfer of inventory. A list of the equipment and its description with inventory numbers should be forwarded to the Purchasing Department. Large items can be removed by the Maintenance Department for storage.

Periodically, the Purchasing Department is responsible for disposing of surplus property by placing the items in a public auction or placing the items on an internet auction. Surplus property is property that still has some usefulness. Surplus property items could be vehicles, heavy road equipment or personal property such as land or buildings. The County may also elect to dispose of certain surplus property through an advertised sealed bid.

County property which is not disposed of using the auction or by sealed bid procedure becomes salvage property. Salvage property is property that has no usefulness, worn out, damaged or is obsolete. Salvage property may be destroyed or donated to certain charitable organizations approved by state statute. Salvage property may be destroyed or donated only with the Purchasing Department approval.

Proceeds from the disposal of surplus property or salvage originally bought from the general fund shall be deposited and credited back to the general fund. Proceeds from the sale of surplus property or salvage originally bought from road & bridge or forfeiture funds shall be deposited and credited back to those funds.

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CHAPTER 22

REIMBURSEMENT OF TRAVEL EXPENSE

Purpose

The Taylor County Commissioners' Court recognizes that the expenditure of public funds is necessary to conduct County business. The purpose of this policy is to provide appropriate guidelines to Elected Officials, Department Heads, and employees when requesting reimbursement for expenses incurred in the conduct of official county business. All requests for reimbursement of expenses are subject to documentation and reasonableness, and will be honored in conformance with adopted policies and procedures.

Authority

Section 152.001 of the Texas Local Government Code gives the County Commissioners' Court the authority to set travel expenses and other allowances for all County Officials and employees using public funds. Upon adoption or modification of this policy, the County Auditor shall be responsible for implementation and enforcement of the policy, in accordance with Local Government Code 112.001, 112.006, and 112.007.

Definitions

Official County Business is defined by the Commissioners' Court as travel necessary to carry out the prescribed official duties of each office, as well as activities directly related to or in support of the governmental functions of Taylor County. Official county business also includes professional/educational travel to attend meetings, conferences, and training programs either required by statute or that promote individual employee growth and development that is beneficial to the County. This definition includes any other travel recognized by the court as official business of the County.

Budget

Expenditures carried out with the scope of official county business travel are restricted by the budgeted amount approved by the Commissioners' Court. Expenditures over budgeted amounts may not be reimbursed if other budgeted funds are not available in the departmental budget.

Travel

Approval of travel expenditures vary based on the type of travel.

Out-of-County Travel

The Elected Official/Department Head is responsible for authorizing, within budget restraints, all out-of-county travel for themselves and their employees. Reimbursement of out-of-county travel costs is based upon the most economical mode of travel that is reasonably available and detailed further in the chapter.

Out-of-State Travel

Due to the infrequency of out-of-state travel and the extensive associated costs, pre-approval from the Commissioners' Court is required for out-of-state training and conferences. Pre-approval may be granted during the budget process or prior to booking the trip. Law enforcement departments (including District Attorney, Corrections, and Juvenile) are exempt from the pre-approval requirement for out-of-state travel.

Mileage Reimbursement

Mileage will be reimbursed at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Standard Mileage Rate effective at the time of travel. Mileage reimbursements will be calculated from the departure location to the destination location. Departure location will, in most circumstances, be an employee's home or their primary office/worksite. Mileage reimbursement calculations for return trips may be different than the departure trip if the employee did not return to the original departure location. The selection of locations is subject to Elected Official/Department Head discretion. Employees are expected to use the shortest or most efficient distance between destinations for all travel.

Commuting Mileage

Miles driven to and from an employee's residence and their primary office/worksite are not eligible for reimbursement.

In-County Mileage

Employees using their personal vehicle in the scope of official county business (that do not receive a car allowance) will be reimbursed for miles driven.

Out-of-County/State Mileage

Employees using their personal vehicle in the scope of official county will be reimbursed for miles driven. A copy of the route is required to be submitted with the reimbursement request. Employees may provide routes using any internet-based mapping website (Google Maps, MapQuest, etc.). Deviation from the most direct route may be reimbursed to the employee if an appropriate explanation or other documentation is provided.

Incidental Mileage

Employees will be reimbursed for incidental mileage while in the destination location. Incidental mileage reported should be for actual miles driven in the scope of official county business, which may include (but is not limited to): driving to the host site from an alternate hotel, traveling for meals eaten away from the host site, attending sponsored activities away from the host site, and meetings attended away from the host site. Employees may be required to provide additional documentation or descriptions of the incidental travel as needed. Mileage for personal reasons while in a destination location will not be reimbursed.

Hotels/Lodging

Taylor County will reimburse employees for the following hotel/lodging expenses:

- Cost of hotel/lodging for the night *preceding* the start of the event.
- Cost of hotel/lodging for each night *during* the event.
- Cost of hotel/lodging for the night *of* the day the event ends.

The period of attendance and timing of arrival/departure are subject to Elected Official/ Department Head discretion. The most economical and reasonable travel times should be considered in the application of this policy. Any additional request for hotel reimbursement beyond this period must be pre-approved by the Commissioners' Court.

Reimbursement for hotel/lodging is for out-of-county/state travel only. Taylor County will reimburse (up to) the host hotel rate or documented overflow rate for training and conferences attended. Employees should seek the most reasonable accommodation if the host hotel and overflow hotel are not available. An employee may be reimbursed for hotel rates above the host hotel rate if the host and overflow hotel are not available, subject to any additional documentation request. Taylor County will not reimburse employees for additional costs incurred for a guest staying in a hotel room with an employee. Additionally, incidental costs incurred and charged to the room (food, drinks, room service, etc.) are not eligible for reimbursement. Expenses of this nature must be reimbursed to the County if the hotel room is paid using a county credit card.

Meals

Employees will only be reimbursed for their own meals under this policy. Employees may receive reimbursement for meals based on the following guidelines.

In-County Travel

Meals for events hosted within Taylor County are not eligible for individual reimbursement.

Out-of-County/State Travel – Overnight Stay

Employees will be reimbursed at a daily rate for meals while traveling for official county business. This rate will be set and reviewed by the Commissioners' Court periodically. The current daily rate is \$68, which is based on the *2025 GSA Standard Rate-Meals and Incidental Expense*. For the day of departure and day of return, employees will be reimbursed at 75% of the daily rate. Exception - employees may be reimbursed at 100% of the daily rate for the day of departure and day of return if travel to the destination requires 8 or more hours of travel and is driven on the same day.

Out-of-County/State Travel – Without Overnight Stay (Day Travel)

Employees will be reimbursed at the following per meal rate: Breakfast - \$16 / Lunch - \$19 / Dinner - \$28. Per IRS regulations, reimbursement for day travel meals is reported as a taxable benefit to the employee. Day travel that requires a departure time before 7:00AM and a return time after 6:00PM is eligible for breakfast and/or dinner reimbursement, respectively.

Meals Provided for Hosted Training

Meals may be provided to employees for training hosted by the County. This type of expense is charged at the departmental level, not reimbursed at the individual employee level. For a meal to be eligible, the training/education event would need to meet one of the following criteria:

- Held over the standard lunch hour, with no break in work hours provided.
- A full day education event hosted onsite that is eligible for continuing education hours.
- Held in the hours before or after the standard 8 to 5 workday (or the department's standard operating hours).

Meals provided must be economical and appropriate for the setting and are subject to all other purchasing requirements and standard review. Meals provided in this category are not included as a taxable benefit to the employee.

Other Expenses

Employees engaged in necessary and authorized travel outside of Taylor County may be reimbursed for other actual expenses incurred. Subject to appropriate documentation and reasonableness, expenses will be reimbursed for the following:

- **Registration Fees** – Fees paid by employee for event registration.
- **Parking Fees** – To be eligible for reimbursement, the hotel/conference location must 1) offer paid parking as their only option or 2) free parking is unavailable due to capacity or isn't safely accessible due to proximity/individual health concerns. Employees must submit a receipt for the parking expenses incurred. This applies to paid self-park and valet parking.
- **Luggage/Bellhop Fees** – To be eligible for reimbursement, the service must be a requirement of the hotel/conference location. (Ex. Bags are required to be delivered to hotel rooms) A receipt is not required for fees or tips, but a maximum of \$10.00 will be reimbursed per hotel stay. An explanation of the expense should be included with the reimbursement request.
- **Tolls** – Cost of tolls in traveling the shortest distance between destinations.
- **Taxi Fare/Ride-Sharing** – Used for official county business only.
- **Car Rental** – Used for official county business only.

Use of County Credit Card

As an alternative, County issued credit cards are available to use for hotel reservations and conference registrations. Cards are available for check out in the Treasurer's office. Receipts must be provided to the Treasurer at the time the credit card is returned.

Documentation

Employees are required to provide a copy of the registration for the event attended with their reimbursement request. The event registration must include: the employee's name; the event location; event start/end date; and a general description of the event. If the registration does

not include all of the required information, additional documentation is required to be submitted with the expense reimbursement.

Types of additional documentation include: an event agenda, a meeting summary from the hosting entity's website, an email notice/other correspondence containing relevant details about the training/meeting, or internal approval documentation required by the specific County Office. Only one additional item is required if the registration does not include the details noted above. If these items are not available, or the meeting/training does not have a formal registration process, employees are required to provide a detailed description of the event and note that the registration and supporting documentation was unavailable.

Reimbursement Process

Employees must complete the appropriate form provided by the Auditor's Office and submit the form, along with the required documentation noted above, to the Purchasing Department for processing.

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CHAPTER 23

MISCELLANEOUS

Posting of Materials

The bulletin boards located in the foyer of the 1st floor of the Taylor County Courthouse are to be used for official public notices only. Posting of items in common areas must be approved in advance by the County Judge or his/her designee. Posting of items within each department must be approved in advance by the Department Head.

Solicitation

County employees are not allowed to solicit from their fellow employees during working hours except for donations for funeral, illnesses, farewell parties, retirements, weddings, or similar situations. No solicitation from outside sources will be made without express written permission of the County Judge or his/her designee. Children of employees may solicit as long as the activity does not interfere with county business and is a charitable or community type fund raiser - not a "for profit" money maker.

Meetings & Conference Rooms

Taylor County has meeting & conference rooms located in various county buildings. Use of these rooms is restricted to County sponsored or community related activities. For availability and scheduling of these rooms, contact County Administration for assistance.

Use of County Supplies, Equipment, etc.

All non-business use must not interfere with Taylor County business and must be approved by the employee's department head. Therefore, personal use is allowed, when authorized, as long as the use does not violate ANY part of County personnel policies. Consumable items used by employees for personal purposes shall be reimbursed to the County in a manner prescribed by the County Judge. Employees who use the various electronic systems and their contents for personal, non-county reasons, without approval, could be subject to discipline up to, and including discharge.

Tobacco Free Workplace

Taylor County endeavors to provide a healthy environment. Therefore, any form of tobacco consumed in county buildings is strictly prohibited. Additionally, no smoking is allowed within twenty (20) feet of the exterior entranceways.

Because of the relative novelty of the technology and the possible relationship to tobacco laws and medical drug policies, electronic cigarette (e-cigs) legislation and public health investigations are currently pending in many countries. Current regulations vary widely, from regions with no regulations to others banning the devices entirely.

In keeping with efforts to provide a healthy environment, Taylor County prohibits the use of electronic cigarettes in county buildings.

Copy Machines

County owned/leased copy machines will be used only for business related to the operation of the county offices and departments. Copies may be made on the county owned/leased machines for the general public at a fee of \$0.10 per copy unless otherwise specified by the Commissioners' Court or state statute. Copies may be made by an employee for their own personal use at the posted rate per copy on the HONOR SYSTEM.

Facsimile (Fax) Machines and Emailed Documents

Personal use of county facsimile machines by employees and citizens is authorized as long as the use does not interfere with county business. Facsimile transmissions subject to long distance charges will be reimbursed to the county. Minimum charges for long distance facsimile transmissions and emailed documents are \$2.00 for documents up to 4 pages in length and \$0.50 per page for all pages over the minimum.

County Mail

To insure same day processing, county mail should be delivered to the mailroom by 3:30 p.m. each afternoon. Envelope flaps must be up if you want your mail sealed. Large envelopes and bulky mail should already be sealed. Mail that already has postage must be sealed and placed in the proper box. No unstamped personal mail will be processed.

County Telephones

County telephones are not to be used for personal business except for brief local calls.

Elected officials may authorize personal long distance phone calls when requested by employees. Although this action is discouraged - reimbursement must be made to the County Treasurer's office.

The County provides cellular telephones to employees whose job functions require this communication tool. Use of cellular phones while driving county vehicles is discouraged, unless responding to an emergency or the vehicle is parked. All Department Heads are encouraged to purchase and use hands-free devices for cellular phone, while operating county vehicles.

Personal use of cellular phones is discouraged and will be at the discretion of the Department Head if allowed during work hours. Employees who are provided county cellular telephones must also reimburse the County for all charges associated with its personal use. Reimbursement must be made to the County Purchasing Department upon receipt of the monthly departmental telephone bill.

Storage Space Allocation

No department shall use any space other than their immediate office for storage of records and/or material without prior approval of the Commissioners' Court.

Records Management

All Departments shall keep business records of their department according to requirements set forth in Vernon's Civil Statutes. Department Heads shall contact the County Records Management Office to assist in record management, necessary microfilming and storage.

Personal Property

Taylor County will not be responsible for any employee's personal property located on or in any Taylor County facility or equipment. This includes all personal property currently on the premises as well as any item subsequently brought on the premises. Employees who choose to bring personal property to the workplace do so at their own risk of loss.

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996

Taylor County fully supports The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 which provides for a much strengthened Child Support Enforcement Program. The Child Support Enforcement Program benefits children and families by locating non-custodial parents, establishing paternity when necessary, and establishing and enforcing child support orders. Taylor County is required under the Act to report information on newly hired employees to the appropriate state agency.

Open Records Copy Costs

The Texas Open Records Act governs charges for copies of and access to public information. The Texas General Services Commission adopts reasonable charges for requests for open records, unless another law provides a different charge for specific information. Taylor County has adopted the rate schedule set forth by the General Services Commission for requests for open records. Waivers or reduced charges must be approved by the Commissioners' Court.

Standard paper copy -- \$.10 per page.

Minimum charges for long distance facsimile transmissions and emailed documents are \$2.00 for documents up to 4 pages in length and \$0.50 per page for all pages over the minimum.

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Appendix A

Taylor County Compensation & Classification Matrix – A-1

TAYLOR COUNTY COMPENSATION & CLASSIFICATION MATRIX - see next page

These guidelines are to assist in classification of County employees .

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Appendix B

ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

Accident/Incident Reporting and Investigation Report – Appendix B-1

Use this form for non-employee injuries and employee vehicle accidents

- Reports must be turned in to county Risk Manager as soon as possible after the injury, incident, and/or accident.
- This report shall not be used for employee work-related injuries.

Work Related Injury Report – Appendix B-2

Use this form for employee work-related injuries

- Reports must be turned in to county Risk Manager as soon as possible after work-related injury.

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TAYLOR COUNTY ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION

TO BE COMPLETED FOR NON-EMPLOYEE ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS OR
COUNTY VEHICLE ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS ONLY

Name of Person Involved in Incident/Accident/Injury _____
Home Address _____
Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Date/Time of Accident/Incident/Injury _____ (am/pm)
Location of Accident/Incident/Injury (building/stairs/steps/sidewalk/street/road)

Description of Accident or Incident (for more space, attach additional sheet of paper)

Was Person Involved in Accident or Incident Injured? (Yes/No)
Injury Information (List cause of injury and Body part injured)

Injury Description (Check all that apply, if other explain)

_____ scratch/bump/bruise/cut _____ first aid _____ medical treatment _____ chest pain
_____ conscious _____ unconscious _____ trauma _____ other _____

Ambulance Called (Yes/No) Taken to Hospital (Yes/No) Hospital
County EMT Called (Yes/No) Taken by EMT (Yes/No) Hospital
Law Enforcement Contacted – [Vehicle Accidents] (Yes/No)

Were there any witnesses? (Yes/No)
Witnesses (List names of witnesses and statements)
Name _____ Statement _____

Name _____ Statement _____

Evidence (attach photographs, drawings, [police reports required for vehicle accidents])

Name of Individual Completing Report Form _____

Date of Report _____ **Department** _____ **Occupation** _____

Date/Time Reported (phone/mailed) **to Risk Manager** _____ (am/pm)
(TO BE COMPLETED BY RISK MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT)

Date/Time Received by Risk Manager _____

Results of Risk Manager's Investigation

ALL ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORTS WILL BE FORWARDED
TO THE RISK MANAGER FOR INVESTIGATION

**TAYLOR COUNTY
WORK RELATED INJURY REPORT**

INJURED EMPLOYEE'S INFORMATION

Date/Time of Injury _____ Date of Report _____
Name of Employee _____ SS# _____
Address _____ City/State _____ Zip Code _____
Home Phone# _____ Date of Birth _____ Department _____
Employment Date _____ Marital Status _____ No. of Minor Children _____

Detailed Description of the Injury (type of injury, right/left, upper/lower, etc.)

Location Where Injury Occurred (office, dayroom, parking lot, file room, county road, etc.)

Witnesses Names	Address	Phone#
_____	_____	_____

Name of Doctor or Hospital Where Treatment was Received:

Signature of Injured Employee: _____ Date: _____

DEPARTMENT HEAD/SUPERVISOR'S COMMENTS

Date/Description (Lifting, Hazards ID., etc.) of Last Safety Training _____
Recommendations to Avoid Recurrence of this Type of Injury:

Return to Work Date _____ Full or Limited Duties _____
First Day Unable to Work _____ Expected Length of Disability _____

Signature of Department Head/Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

Please Forward Report to Human Resources and Risk Management Office Immediately

Appendix C

BOMB THREAT PROCEDURES

Department Head Responsibilities

In the Event of a Bomb Threat:

- Upon the initial call from the person making the threat, have staff member use the **ATF checklist** - refer to **Appendix C-2** - copy number from caller ID, have another staff member copy the number for verification and at the conclusion of the call, don't hang up the receiver. Department Head or designee is to be notified by the staff immediately.
- Department Head or designee contacts the Sheriff's Office at 674-1300. Inform the person answering the phone of the threat and SO staff will be dispatched immediately.
- Inform the department staff to turn off all cell phones and not place or answer calls from the land lines.
- Inform the County Judge but maintain confidentiality with everyone else.
- Await instructions from the Sheriff's Office staff. The threat level is to be determined by Sheriff's Office personnel only.
- If the Sheriff's Office staff determine that evacuation is necessary, all Department Heads will be contacted individually. If you are not available, a second-in-command must be designated by you.
- All staff are to take their personal belongings as if they are leaving for the day and exit the building calmly. They will leave their offices open and accessible for the detection teams. Absolutely no use of cell phones during this procedure.
- Vehicles will only be removed from the parking lots or adjacent streets, when directed by Sheriff's Office personnel. Cell phones may once again be used once employees are at least one block away from the building.
- Department Heads and designees will provide their phone number to the Sheriff's Office and the County Judge to be able to communicate the status of the evacuation and search. For updates, it is the responsibility of the Department Head to contact the Sheriff's Office at 674-1300.
- Each Department Head will maintain a current employee call list to notify their employees when to return to work.



TAYLOR COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Place This Card Under Your Telephone

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. When is the bomb going to explode?
2. Where is it right now?
3. What does it look like?
4. What kind of bomb is it?
5. What will cause it to explode?
6. Did you place the bomb?
7. Why?
8. What is your address?
9. What is your name?

EXACT WORDING OF THE THREAT:

Sex of caller: _____ Race: _____
Age: _____ Length of call: _____

Number at which call is received:

Time: _____ Date: / /

BOMB THREAT

CALLER'S VOICE:

- | | |
|----------|-----------------|
| Calm | Nasal |
| Angry | Stutter |
| Excited | Lisp |
| Slow | Raspy |
| Rapid | Deep |
| Soft | Ragged |
| Loud | Clearing throat |
| Laughter | Deep breathing |
| Crying | Cracking voice |
| Normal | Disguised |
| Distinct | Accent |
| Slurred | Familiar |
| _____ | Whispered |

If voice is familiar, who did it sound like?

BACKGROUND SOUNDS:

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Street noises | Factory machinery |
| Crockery | Animal noises |
| Voices | Clear |
| PA System | Static |
| Music | Local |
| House noises | Long distance |
| Motor | Booth |
| Office machinery | Other _____ |

THREAT LANGUAGE:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Wellspoken (educated) | Incoherent |
| Fout | Taped |
| Irrational | Message read by threat maker |

REMARKS: _____

Report call immediately to:

Phone number _____

Date / / _____

Name _____

Position _____

Phone number _____

Appendix D

TORNADO ASSEMBLY AREAS/LOCATIONS

After receiving notification from the Sheriff's Office, the County Judge's Office will call security to activate the Mass Notification System according to the emergency.

The Courthouse

- After receiving notification each department listed below will contact the other offices on their floor and make sure those personnel have completely evacuated.
 - Courthouse Security
 - County Auditor
 - District Attorney
 - District Clerk (to notify District Judge's Offices)
 - County Courts At Law #2
- All first floor personnel will evacuate to the Jury Assembly Room on the north side of the first floor and the east side restrooms. If those spaces are full, employees should use the stairwells for safety.
- All second floor personnel will evacuate to the east side stair well and restroom. If those spaces are full, employees should use the west side stairwells and restroom.
- All third floor personnel will evacuate to the east side stair well and restroom. If those spaces are full, employees should use the west side stairwells and restroom.
- All fourth floor personnel will evacuate to the east side stairwell at lowest point and restroom. If the east side stairwell is full, use the west side stairwell proceeding to the lowest point and restroom.
- All fifth floor personnel will evacuate to the areas listed above, on the lowest point of the east side stairwell and restrooms, if stairwell is full, use west side stairwell proceeding to the lowest point and restrooms.
- Department Heads will ensure that locations of assembly areas and/or evacuation routes are posted within their office.

Old Courthouse

After receiving notification from County Judge's office, Constable Pct. 1 will initiate the Mass Notification System according to the emergency and will alert all offices in basement, first floor, and CSCD Director.

■ Community Supervision and Corrections Department (CSCD)

This director of the office will be responsible for evacuating their staff and/or clients to the basement or bottom floor of the building.

■ 600 Pecan-Purchasing & Records Dept.

After receiving notification, Purchasing Agent and Records Director will be responsible for evacuating their staff to the copy room or center offices or hallway away from glass and exterior doors.

Plaza Building

- After receiving notification from County Judge's office, Tax Assessor initiates the Mass Notification System according to the emergency. Each department head listed below will be responsible for their staff evacuation to designated location.

- Tax Assessor / Collector
- Social Services
- Veterans' Service Office
- District Attorney - Check Fraud/Attorneys
- Environmental Office
- Employee Health Clinic (EHC), if open
- CASA of the Big Country

- Individuals in these offices should evacuate to the interior hallway by Elections office and MPO Room on the bottom floor of the Plaza Building

Law Enforcement Center

In the event of a tornado watch, the Sheriff's office will usually have first warning and will notify the Judge's Office. The Sheriff's Office will notify the **Domestic Relations Office, Jail and Juvenile..** Individuals in the Law Enforcement Center should evacuate to the inner most part of the Sheriff's offices.

Juvenile and Adult Detention

After receiving notification, individuals in these facilities should follow the promulgated procedures according to the individual department's policy.

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Appendix E

TAYLOR COUNTY (TO OBTAIN DRIVING RECORD)

DISCLOSURE

As part of our hiring background and investigation, we may obtain consumer reports to prepare an investigative consumer report. The investigative consumer report may consist of contacting all listed prior employers to verify your employment history. It may also include, but not be limited to, credit information reports, background reports and driving history records. Under the provisions of the Fair Credit Reporting Act (15 USC at 1681-1681u) as amended, before we can seek such reports, we must have your written permission to obtain the information. You have the right, upon written request, to a complete and accurate disclosure of the nature and scope of the investigation. You are also entitled to a copy of your Rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE TO OBTAIN INFORMATION

Under the provisions of the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 USC, Section 1681 et seq., the Americans with Disabilities Act and all applicable federal, state, and local laws, I hereby authorize and permit to obtain a consumer report and/or an investigative consumer report which may include the following:

1. My employment records;
2. Records concerning any driving, criminal history, credit history, civil record, workers' compensation (post-offer only) and drug testing;
3. (For truck drivers only) In accordance with the Department of Transportation Motor Carrier Safety Regulations, Section 382.413, information concerning alcohol and controlled substances for the past 2 years;
4. Verification of my academic and/or professional credentials; and information and/or copies of documents from any military service records.

I understand that an "investigative consumer report" may include information as to my character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and mode of living which may be obtained by interviews with individuals with whom I am acquainted or who may have knowledge concerning any such items of information.

I agree that a copy of this authorization has the same effect as an original.

I hereby release and hold harmless any person, firm, or entity that discloses matters in accordance with this authorization, as well as from liability that might otherwise result from the request for use of and/or disclosure of any or all of the foregoing information.

I understand and acknowledge that under provision of the Fair Credit Reporting Act I may request a copy of any consumer report from the consumer reporting agency that compiled the report, after I have provided proper identification.

I hereby authorize to obtain and prepare an investigative consumer report as set forth above, as part of its investigation of my employment application. This authorization shall remain in effect over the course of my employment. Reports may be ordered periodically during the course of my employment.

Full Name _____ (please print clearly) Signature Date _____

Appendix F

DEFINITIONS

Accrued leave	- paid time off from work which is earned but not yet used.
At-will employment	- means that employees are not under an employment contract. The Employment At Will Doctrine simply means that either the employee or the employer can terminate the employment relationship for any legal reason or no reason and at any time, either with or without notice.
Catastrophic injury or illness	- A terminal, life threatening, and/or severe FMLA-qualifying condition or combination of conditions affecting the mental or physical health of the employee that requires the services of a licensed practitioner for a prolonged period of time and that forces the employee to exhaust all accrued leave time (sick leave, vacation leave, and compensatory time) and to lose compensation from the County for the employee.
Compensation	- means a financial benefit. Compensation is usually thought of as wages, pay or salary; as monetary benefit. Compensation or remuneration may also be a gift or special favors which have a monetary value.
Compensatory time	- is paid time off the job which is earned and accrued by an employee for employment in excess of the statutory hours for which overtime is required. The rate is one and one half hours for each hour of employment over the statutory amount.
Consumable items	- are those items, when used that are not able to be re-used. These include paper, ink, envelopes, pens, pencils, etc.
Department head	- includes elected officials, heads of departments appointed by the Commissioners' court, all officials appointed to elected offices, and all heads of departments appointed by the District Judges.

Drug	- includes all illegal drugs or derivatives thereof, illegal inhalants, all drug paraphernalia, alcohol, and prescription drugs when not taken as directed by the employee's doctor.
E-mail	- Communication or documents which are sent via a computer modem or network.
Electronic Information and Communication Systems	- These systems are the computers and other information systems and networks, telephone communications systems, facsimile machines, photocopiers, intranet and internet, etc. They also include the information that these systems produce, contain and transmit.
Eligible employees	- any employee who works the customary minimum of 30 hours in a budgeted position.
Essential job functions	- these are the tasks or elements for which the position was created.
Immediate family	- includes the following; spouse, son, daughter, grandchild, sister, brother, father, mother, grandparents, aunt and uncle. Step and in-law relations should be included for any of those listed above. ALL EXCEPTIONS SHALL BE APPROVED BY THE ELECTED OFFICIAL OF THE APPLICABLE OFFICE.
Insubordination	- failure or unwillingness to accept or recognize the authority of a superior. Also includes failure to follow the directions or procedures of their department or supervisor.
Intoxication	- to be under the effect of alcohol or drugs
Intermittent leave	- is leave taken periodically or on an occasional basis. Example: chemotherapy treatment on Monday afternoons.
Leave	- is the time during regular working hours in which an employee is away from the job. Leave may be either paid or unpaid.

Licensed practitioner	- a practitioner who is licensed to practice in the State of Texas, who is practicing within the scope of his/her license.
Nepotism	- The practice of public officials hiring employees who are related to them within the third degree of consanguinity and the second degree of affinity.
New Employee Orientation	- New employee orientation consists of the federal and state required paperwork for employees as well as Taylor County specific information. These include personnel data forms, insurance, retirement, general safety training and any other required forms.
Pay groups	- For purposes of determining salary, Taylor County positions are grouped according to the skill, knowledge, responsibility, decision making, experience and effort required, in addition to the working conditions.
Political activities	- where an employee engages in one of the following: (A) An employee soliciting support, either financially or votes, as an actual candidate for elected office. (B) Any activity in support of candidates for political office. (C) Any activity in support of any public statement, belief, or law; such as participating in rallies, marches, debates, etc.
Private business	- all business activities not related to County business.
Remuneration	- see compensation
Retiree	- a person with the 8 year vesting and being at least 60 years of age or those who have attained Rule 75 in accordance with the Texas Counties & District Retirement System.

Serious health condition

- A FMLA-qualifying condition which requires inpatient care at a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider, defined as one or more of the following.

- (1) Incapacity of more than three consecutive days and subsequent related treatment or incapacity that requires two or more treatments by a health care provider which results in a regimen of continuing treatment;
- (2) Incapacity due to pregnancy or prenatal care;
- (3) Incapacity or treatment due to chronic serious health condition;
- (4) Permanent or long term incapacity due to condition for which treatment may not be effective; or
- (5) Need for multiple treatments by a health care provider, or for a condition that would result in more than a 3-day absence if the treatment were not obtained.

User or end-user

- A user or end-user is the employee or person operating the Electronic Information/Communication Systems.

Voice mail

- method of communicating messages for persons who are unable to take a telephone call or who are away from their telephone. These telephone messages are recorded in an electronic "mail box" by the caller until they can be retrieved by the employee.

Appendix G

Human Resources Forms

Department Head Responsibilities

Employee New Hire Notice – Appendix G-1

Use this form for new employees coming into your department through the hire process or transfer process.

- Completed forms to be turned in to the Human Resources Department.

Employee Change Notice – Appendix G-2

Use this form for employees leaving their positions by transfer, retirement, resignation, or termination.

- Reports must be turned in to Human Resources Department as soon as possible.

Exit Interview Form – Appendix G-3

Use this form for employee leaving Taylor County employment

- Completed forms to be turned in to the Human Resources Department.

PLEASE PRINT

Department Head/Supervisor Signature _____ Date _____

Human Resources Representative Signature _____ Date _____

**THIS FORM WILL BE SENT OR FAXED TO
HUMAN RESOURCES FOR ALL NEW HIRES**

G-1

Revised 1/19/12

PLEASE PRINT

Department Head/Supervisor Signature _____ Date _____

Human Resources Representative Signature _____ Date _____

**THIS FORM WILL BE SENT OR FAXED TO
HUMAN RESOURCES FOR ALL EMPLOYEE CHANGES**

G-2



PLEASE PRINT

Revised 1/19/12

Signature of Employee _____ Date _____

PLEASE RETURN TO HUMAN RESOURCES

Signature of HR Representative _____ Date _____



Taylor County
Human Resources/Risk Management
400 Oak Street, Suite 120
Abilene, Texas 79602
(325) 674-1220 or 1221

**TAYLOR COUNTY
EMPLOYEE SICK LEAVE DONATION FORM**

Full-time employees have the option to receive donated sick leave from any other eligible full-time employees when:

- The employee who is receiving donated sick leave has a catastrophic qualifying illness or injury, for either themselves or a qualifying family member, which prevents them from working
- The employee who is receiving donated sick leave has been a full-time employee for a period of no less than 60 days and no more than 395 days
- The employee who is donating sick leave will maintain a balance of no less than 40 hours of accrued sick leave after their donation

I have read the rules and regulations in the County Policy Manual concerning donating accrued sick leave hours to eligible full-time employees, and I do choose to donate.

I understand that these hours, once donated to other eligible employees, will be subtracted from my available sick leave balance. All donations to other employees become the property of the receiving employee and cannot be returned to the donating employee.

Authorization to deduct hours from my accumulated sick leave is verified by my signature.

Donating Employee _____ Department _____
(PLEASE PRINT)

Receiving Employee _____ Department _____
(PLEASE PRINT)

Number of hours to be donated _____ Date _____

Donating Employee's Signature _____

IMPORTANT: All forms must be returned to the Human Resource Department for eligibility determination. Once a determination has been made, each employee will be notified of the approval or denial.

MENTAL HEALTH LEAVE POLICY

Effective September 1, 2021

Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the use of mental health leave by personnel employed by this agency who directly experience a traumatic event while on duty. Mental health leave will support employees in maintaining a healthy state of mind while at work and at home.

Section 2. Definitions

1. Traumatic event: an event which occurs in the employee(s) scope of employment when the employee is involved in the response to, or investigation of, an event that causes the employee to experience unusually strong emotional reactions or feelings which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function during or after the incident.

Traumatic events may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Major disasters which may include response to weather related events involving casualties; or explosions with casualties; or search and recovery missions involving casualties;
 - b. Incidents involving casualties which may include shootings or traffic accidents;
 - c. Line of duty death or suicide of an agency member;
 - d. Death of a child;
 - e. Officer(s) involved shooting of a person.
2. Mental health leave: administrative leave with pay granted in response to a traumatic event that occurred in the scope of the employee's employment.
 3. Mental Health Professional: a licensed social or mental health worker, counselor, psychotherapist, psychologist or psychiatrist.

Section 3. Applicability

This policy applies to every individual employed by the agency.

Section 4. Conditions

An employee shall be allowed up to 40 hours of paid mental health leave per **Traumatic Event**, subject to the following conditions:

1. The leave is
 - A. approved by the Sheriff or his designee; or
 - B. ordered by a mental health professional; and
2. The leave is taken as a result of a **Traumatic Event** that occurred while on duty.

Section 5. Extensions of mental health leave

Extensions of mental health leave may be available under certain circumstances. Any request for an extension shall be accompanied by documentation from a mental health professional who is counseling the employee. The request may extend the leave by three working days. Each officer may request no more than two extensions, each supported by sufficient documentation by the mental health professional.

The sheriff shall grant the extension(s) upon the receipt of sufficient documentation to explain the need for the extension.

Section 6. Requesting mental health leave

After experiencing an identified traumatic event while in the course and scope of their employment, it is prudent for the affected employee to openly communicate their current mental and physical status to their supervisor. Employees should be open to suggestions by their supervisor in using mental health leave and/or seeking assistance from a crisis intervention professional.

An employee directly involved in a traumatic event may request the use of mental health leave. The request shall be made in writing through the chain of command. The request shall be treated as a priority matter and a decision on the granting of the leave shall be made no later than 24 hours following the submission of the request. The request shall be granted unless the chain of command can articulate specific compelling reasons to deny granting the leave.

A supervisor or coworker who becomes aware of behavioral changes in an officer directly involved in a traumatic event should suggest to the officer that he or she seek mental health leave and the assistance of a mental health professional.

An employee's failure to voluntarily seek mental health assistance shall be addressed through the chain of command. If the Sheriff, or his designee, determines that the employee is in need of mental health services, the Sheriff, or his designee, may compel the employee to take mental health leave and seek mental health services in a reasonable period of time, not to exceed 72 hours.

The employee will not be allowed to return to their normal duties until they have been cleared by a mental health professional.

Section 7. Anonymity.

The agency will keep requests to take mental health leave and any medical information related to mental health leave under this policy confidential to the extent allowed by law and separate from the employee's general personnel file. The agency cannot guarantee anonymity of information that is otherwise public or necessary to carry out the agency's duties under the law.

Any request for mental health leave shall be treated as strictly confidential by all parties involved and shall not be discussed or disclosed outside the employee's immediate chain of command, and only as necessary to facilitate the use of the leave. Any employee or supervisor who becomes aware of behavioral changes and suggests the employee seek mental health leave shall not discuss that matter with any third party. Any breach of this confidentiality shall be grounds for discipline.

Confidentiality may be waived by the employee seeking mental health leave. Confidentiality may be waived under circumstances, which indicate the officer is a danger to himself or herself or others and agency personnel must confer with mental health professionals.

Section 8. Documenting Metal Health Leave

Once an employee has been granted use of mental health leave, the Sheriff or his designee will notify the Auditors Office in writing to make the time adjustment. The employee will notate on their time sheet in the "Other" column "Admin" and the hours used for mental health leave. If the request is denied, it must be provided in writing to the requesting employee by a designated member of the employee's chain of command.

Mental health leave will run concurrently with FMLA where FMLA is available.

While utilizing mental health leave, employees will continue to earn all benefits, seniority, and applicable special pays.

Section 9. Effect on Paid Leave Balances.

The agency will not reduce an eligible employee's sick leave, vacation leave, holiday, or other paid leave balance for mental health leave taken under this policy.

Section 10. List of Available Mental Health Services

Peer Support

Agency Chaplin

Tele Med Mental Health Services

Crisis Hotline

Betty Hardwick Center

Agency contracted Psychiatry