

# Health Authorities in Texas

## Current Statute

[HSC Chapter 121, Subchapter B, Section\(s\) 121.021-121.025 - Health Authorities](#)

[Chapter 81 - Communicable Disease Prevention and Control Act](#)

## General Information

Established during the 79<sup>th</sup> Legislative session, Health Authorities (HA) serve as a critical part of the state's public health system. [Health and Safety Code](#) establishes and defines a Health Authority in Texas as a physician appointed under the provisions of [Chapter 121](#), to administer state and local laws relating to public health within an appointing body's jurisdiction. Health Authorities are considered an officer of the state when performing duties to implement and enforce laws that protect the public's health.

## Duties

- Establishing, maintaining, and enforcing jurisdictional quarantine orders.
- Aiding local boards of health, and local health departments in quarantine inspections, disease prevention, and suppression efforts, birth, and death statistics, and general sanitation issues within their jurisdiction.
- Reporting the presence of contagious, infectious, and dangerous epidemic diseases to local and state authorities.
- Aiding local jurisdictions and boards of health in carrying out public health-required rules, ordinances, sanitation laws, quarantine rules, and required reporting of any vital statistics collected.

## Qualifications, Appointments, and Terms

A Health Authority must be:

- A competent physician with a reputable professional standing who is legally qualified to practice medicine in the state of Texas and
- A Texas resident.

Health Authority appointees must:

- Take and subscribe to the official oath; and
- Using the [required forms](#) , file the original copies of the Statement of Appointed Officer, Oath of Office, and Certificate of Appointment with their local jurisdiction, as well as submit copies of the originals to the appropriate [Regional Medical Director/Public Health Region](#) at the Department of State Health Services.

Health Authorities are appointed for two-year terms. In the event the acting Health Authority is absent or incapacitated, alternate Health Authorities can be appointed through the process noted above.

[Appointment Forms](#)

[Training and Resources](#)