



# **Employee Policy Manual**

Effective April 21, 2015



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



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## About Williamson County Government

Williamson County's government organization is established by the Constitution of the State of Texas and by state statutes. Its operations are governed by state and federal law and by actions of the Commissioner's Court.

## Commissioner's Court

The [Commissioners' Court](#) consists of four County Commissioners; each elected by the voters of a commissioners' precinct, and County Judge, elected by all of the voters of the County. Officials are elected for a four-year term of public service.

The Commissioners' Court is the chief policy, administrative, and executive branch of County government. Among its many functions, the Court:

- Sets the tax rate
- Adopts the annual budget
- Approves new programs or changes existing ones
- Adopts regulations and policies
- Approves and manages County facilities

The Court carries out these and other specific duties by meeting in regular sessions. Decisions of the Court require a majority vote.

## County Operations

County operations are conducted through departments; each administered by an elected public official or an appointed department head.

## Independent Elected Officials

While the Commissioner's Court has a wide range of authority countywide, in some areas, state law gives greater authority to other elected officials. These elected officials – whether they are Judges, the Tax Assessor-Collector, the County Sheriff, etc., - are directly responsible to the voters for performing the duties assigned to their offices.



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## **1. Scope of Document**

This document constitutes the general personnel policies for all Williamson County employees. Nothing in the manual constitutes a contract or guarantees employment. Policies may be altered, deleted, or amended at any time by action of the Commissioner's Court. If any provision or part of a provision of these policies is held invalid, illegal, or unenforceable, it will not affect the validity of the remaining provisions or parts of provisions, which will remain in effect. In cases where federal or state laws or regulations supersede local guidelines for specific groups of employees, such laws or regulations will substitute for these personnel guidelines only insofar as necessary for compliance. Specific departments may have additional policies unique to their operations.

Elected official's rights and responsibilities as defined by Texas law supersede these policies where conflicts may occur. Elected officials are encouraged to follow all policies contained herein in order to provide uniform application across the County and to protect the County against potential employment related liabilities.

## **2. Employment with Williamson County**

### **2.01 At-Will Employment**

Employment with Williamson County is on an -at-will basis:

- You may resign at any time with or without cause
- Williamson County may terminate the employment relationship at any time with or without cause or notice
- For additional information, see [Section 2.19 -Employee Termination / Separation](#)

### **2.02 Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)**

Williamson County is an [Equal Opportunity Employer](#). All recruiting, hiring, promoting, transferring, demoting, and salary basis for all employees is founded on the principles of [equal opportunity employment](#). Hiring authorities are encouraged to work with the Human Resources Department to ensure that the employment process is conducted in the best interest of the County and its potential employees.

The various types of discrimination prohibited by the laws enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) are:

- Age
- Disability
- Equal Pay / Compensation
- Genetic Information
- Harassment
- National Origin
- Pregnancy



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- Race/Color
- Religion
- Retaliation
- Sex / Gender
- Sexual Harassment

*Only where age or sex is a Bona Fide Occupational Qualification, (BFOQ) or where state or federal law requires it, will these factor into employment decisions. To comply with child labor requirements, the minimum hiring age is 16 years of age.*

The Commissioners' Court determines the maximum budgeted salary for each position and the number of employee positions available for each department. The County, precinct official, or department head is not required to pay the maximum salary. Officials and department heads determine the actual salary of employees so that it does not exceed the amount budgeted for that position or allowed under the County policy.

## 2.03 Recruitment

When a position becomes available, officials and department heads may notify the Human Resources Department to begin a process for formal recruitment. The position is posted with a wage or salary as determined by the Elected Official or Department Head in compliance with the [Compensation Policy](#). The posting will be publicized, as authorized, using the current job description on file. Officials and department heads have three options for posting the position:

**2.03.01 Accepting Applications from within the department/office only:** The Human Resources Department may assist with posting the open job only within the department/office that the vacancy has occurred.

- Regular employees may submit a letter of interest or request for promotion directly to the appropriate Elected Official or Department Head or designated supervisor for consideration
- Applicants have until the posted closing date to submit a letter of interest

**2.03.02 Accepting Applications from current County employees only:** The Human Resources Department may post the open job on the [HR Web site](#) at the discretion of the Elected Official or Department Head or designated supervisor.

**2.03.03 Accepting Applications from the public:** The Human Resources Department may post the position on the [HR Web site](#). Specific vacancies may be posted with other recruitment sources relevant to the position at the expense of the specific department.

- The Human Resources Department only accepts applications for open, posted positions. Resumes alone are not accepted
- Each position that an applicant wishes to apply for needs a County application on file, however, current employees may submit a letter of interest directly to the hiring department



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- Job applicants have the option of completing a job interest card online, notifying them when a position becomes available
- Jobs posted by the Human Resources Department are recommended to be open for at least five (but preferably ten) calendar days

For applications received through the on-line recruiting process, the Human Resources Department will forward all completed, timely applications to the appropriate department/office. HR is available to provide advice and assistance with screening, interviewing, and hiring. HR is also available to work with officials and department heads to develop written interview questionnaires and other materials relevant to the selection process.

The Elected Official or Department Head or designated supervisor within the department where the vacancy occurred makes the final hiring decision. In the case of a department head who reports to the Commissioner's Court, a majority vote of the members of the Commissioners' Court serves as the final decision to appoint a department head.

Positions may be filled by using applications previously received for the same or similar position if the applications were received no later than 180 days prior to the position's current vacancy.

## **2.04 Criminal History and Background Check**

Potential non-law enforcement employees of Williamson County may be required to submit to a criminal history check once a hiring manager has extended a conditional offer of employment.

Non-law enforcement employees may receive a conditional offer of employment before the completion of a criminal conviction check; however, it's not recommended that a new employee be allowed to begin work until the check is complete.

## **2.05 Job Offers**

Successful candidates may receive a job offer letter. Upon request from an office/department, the Human Resources Department is available to assist in preparing the letter for signature by the Elected Official or Department Head. Candidates who were unsuccessful will receive a notice through the electronic applicant system and remain as a record in the online system for at least two years.

## **2.06 Serious Diseases or Disabilities**

- If you have a serious disease or disability, you are encouraged to notify your Elected Official, Department Head, Supervisor and the [Human Resources Department](#) if the adverse health conditions may affect your ability to perform your job, pose a threat to others, or require possible accommodation by the County.



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- A doctor's certification may be necessary to determine your eligibility for continued employment or to determine what type of accommodation may be appropriate.
- County access to your medical information and records provided during this process will be restricted according to practical and legal requirements.
- If you have concerns about working with other employees who have serious illnesses or disabilities, bring those concerns to the attention of your Elected Official, Department Head, Supervisor or the Human Resources Department.
- Related decisions may be based on prevailing laws and/or regulations and on reasonable medical judgments as to the nature, duration, and severity of any risks and/or the probability of harm or disease transmission.
- [Discrimination against employees or applicants](#) because of physical or mental disabilities is strictly prohibited.

## 2.07 Nepotism

**2.07.01 Definition** - Nepotism is showing favoritism to relatives without regard to merit. Nepotism also creates conflicts and potential conflicts of interest. Because of these concerns, the County has developed specific rules regarding the hiring and reporting restrictions that apply to the employment of related persons, as defined below. Further, the [Texas Government Code Chapter 573](#) outlines specific terms prohibiting nepotism by which County Officials must abide. Officials are also discouraged from allowing spouses to work within the same department, whenever possible.

### 2.07.02 Nepotism includes:

- The appointment, confirmation of appointment, or voting for the appointment (or confirmation of appointment) of a person that is compensated with public funds or fees of office by a public official's blood relative.
- For purposes of this Policy, relatives include:
  - Parents
  - Children
  - Siblings
  - Grandparents
  - Grandchildren
  - Great-grandchildren
  - Aunts
  - Uncles
  - Nephews
  - Nieces
  - Great-grandparents

Persons related by marriage include:

- Spouses
  - Mothers-in-law
  - Fathers-in-law
  - Sisters-in-law
  - sons-in-law
  - daughters-in-law
  - brothers-in-law
  - grandparents-in-law
- All relations designated above are subject to the coverage and rules in this Policy.



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- Influencing an office for which you are a candidate, to promote, appoint, or take other employment action for a person you are related to as stated above. Candidates running for Commissioner may not influence those serving on the Commissioners' Court, other officials, or their employees to take such actions.

**Example:** *If you are running for County clerk, you can ask the county tax assessor to hire your son as long as this request is not part of a "trade." You may not agree to perform a similar action for the tax assessor in exchange.*

**Example:** *If you are running for County commissioner, you may not ask a commissioner, other official, or an employee of the County to hire your son.*

- Department heads or supervisors in a department under the Commissioners' Court are not allowed to directly or indirectly supervise an employee who is related to them. According to the [Texas Government Code Chapter 573](#), it is prohibited for a department head or supervisor to have a related employee on any level of their chain of command.
- The County does not hire relatives of employees on a full-time basis in the same department. However, the County reserves the right to hire relatives on a seasonal, part-time or temporary basis from time-to-time, subject to approval by the Human Resources Department. However, even when such exceptions are approved:
  - Relatives shall not be employed in positions where one is under the supervision of another or where both family members are under the same supervisor without the prior express approval of the Human Resources Department; and
  - Two or more relatives shall not be employed in the same department without the prior approval of the Human Resources Department
- A marriage ending in death or divorce ends the relationship by affinity unless there is a surviving child. The marriage is considered to continue for the life of the child.

In compliance with its own policies, the Commissioner's Court will not affirm any Officer who is related to another employee within the same department.

Employees, officials and managers must be alert to the existence of any such relationships in the hiring process, and in the performance and management of their positions. Employee, officers and managers must promptly report any changes in relationships that are covered by or invoke this policy to Human Resources. In the event employees become related after the date of their employment, the situation will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Any employees who have misrepresented their relationship(s) may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, transfers and dismissal. Because Texas law covers many of these issues, criminal liability may also result for certain violations.



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## 2.08 Post Hire

All new employees must complete the following three steps:

- Complete the new hire packet. This includes:
  - Filling out a [Federal I-9](#) *Section 1 by the date of employment*
  - Filling out a [W-4](#) form
  - Providing forms of identification to satisfy the requirements of the Immigration Reform and Control Act. A list of acceptable documents that meet these requirements can be found on the Williamson County Human Resources Department Web site
- Attend a new-hire orientation session at the Human Resources Department. New-hire orientations are held each Monday at 9:00 am and Thursday at 1:30 pm
- Complete and submit your benefits enrollment no later than 31 days from your hire date, including any supporting documentation

*Failure to provide accurate and complete information on the County application or any official employment records may result in dismissal from County employment.*

The [Human Resources Department](#) is available to assist new employees and provide the necessary forms to complete the hiring process.

## 2.09 Texas County and District Retirement System Contributions

Currently all officials, their employees, and employees of other departments are required to participate in the Texas County and District Retirement System ([TCDRS](#)) as a condition of employment. Effective January 1, 2007, all part-time employees will be required to participate in the Texas County and District Retirement System, regardless of the number of hours worked per week or year. Temporary workers are exempt from participation as provided by Retirement System regulations.

The Payroll Department deducts the required amount from your salary and the County makes the required County contribution.

## 2.10 Direct Deposit

Direct Deposit is mandatory. If you do not have a bank account, [Union State Bank \(USB\)](#) will provide a free account into which your pay will be directly deposited. USB is the depository bank for the County. Contact the [County Treasurer's office](#) at 943-1540 to set up a time to visit with a representative from USB. Your funds will be available to you by 8:00 a.m. on pay day. If at any time you need to make an amendment to your account, you must contact Union State Bank. The bank has locations in Georgetown, Liberty Hill, Florence, Round Rock, Killeen and Harker Heights.

- You can print pay slips using [Oracle Self Service](#)
- First and final pay is not available through direct deposit. Retiring or terminating employees will receive a paper paycheck mailed to the address on file. The check cannot be picked up in person
- The County does not guarantee the date that the final paycheck will be received



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- You are encouraged to keep your address current by updating it in [Oracle Self Service](#)

## 2.11 Rounding for Hourly Rates

The payroll system uses a calculated five digit hourly rate to process compensation on a pay period basis. Your hourly rate is rounded to two decimals for printing on your direct deposit notice.

## 2.12 Probationary Period

Officials and department heads may establish probationary periods in which supervisors will give more frequent reviews of your work at the onset of employment to assess your fit in the position. Additional coaching, training or feedback, may take place during this period. A probationary status may also be assigned to an employee who has been promoted or disciplined. This time does not change the [at-will status](#) of employees either during or after the probationary period.

## 2.13 Communications to Employees

All employees are assigned a County email address.

County email is the official communication tool for employee communications. All employees are responsible for accessing and reviewing their County email account for employment-related information.

## 2.14 HR Communication Liaisons

- Each department should appoint one or more HR Communication Liaisons. A liaison may be an Elected Official, Department Head or department employee(s)
- Liaisons ensure receipt of HR related communications by every employee within their department for their shift
- They provide contact information if you need to get in touch with HR. They will provide you with information specific to your issue or concern so that you can find the right person to help you
- Liaisons coordinate internal communications with the HR team to respond to general employee concerns regarding HR-related communications, plans, and programs
- Liaisons support and encourage two-way communications: HR to Liaisons and Liaisons to HR
- In the event of a work-related accident within a department, the Liaisons will assist in completing and submitting an accident report
- Liaisons are also responsible for safety-related activities such as:
  - Retaining a copy of the County's Workplace Safety and Security procedures
  - Maintaining a current roster of department/shift employees
  - Maintaining the department's weather radio, flashlight, and first-aid kit
  - Knowing safe areas inside the building, evacuation routes, and rally points outside
  - Posting the above information in an accessible place
  - Assisting with conducting periodic safety drills—both fire and weather
  - Assisting disabled employees and directing the public during a safety-related incident



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- Knowing building personnel trained in CPR/AED operation and first-aid
- Attend and participate in annual -staff development opportunityll for HR Communication Liaisons

## 2.15 Teleconferencing – Technology Services

The County has multiple teleconferencing phone lines available for use. When possible, teleconferencing should be used in lieu of face-to-face meetings that would otherwise require travel. Access to the teleconferencing phone lines can be obtained through the [Technology Services Department](#).

## 2.16 Employment Records

Applications, recruitment notices, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) information, and other materials related to the application process should be kept for at least two (2) years by the department with the vacant position and for two (2) years after the termination date of employees.

Additionally, records should retain information (based on the County's approved records retention schedule) on the following:

- Documents related to disciplinary actions
- Documents related to performance evaluations
- Certain medical information collected by Williamson County and authorized by law (FMLA, ADA, etc.) that proves eligibility for FMLA, ADA, etc. *This information is voluntary but its absence can result in eligibility being delayed or denied*
- [Employee confidentiality form](#) - You may choose whether the County discloses your home address and telephone number to the public on request. If a new employee does not request confidentiality, the home address and telephone number on file are considered public information (does not apply to law enforcement personnel). *Contact Human Resources to change your confidentiality at any time*

The [County Auditor](#) maintains copies of payroll information and the [Human Resources Department](#) maintains copies of benefits information. Supervisors and employees are encouraged to maintain strict confidentiality regarding an employee's medical or personal information and to limit distribution of this information.

## 2.17 Access to Personnel Files

Typically, only supervisors and management who have a legitimate reason to review information located in personnel files are allowed to do so.

With reasonable notice, employees may review or request a copy of their personnel file by filling out a [form in Human Resources](#). However, upon review, nothing may be removed, altered or added to the file.



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## 2.18 Transfers between Departments or Positions

Employees transferring from one County office or department to another should give at least two weeks' notice to their current official/department head. The current official/department head may waive the two week period.

If an employee assignment changes from a [non-exempt to an exempt position](#), the employee's current comp time balance will be paid out as of the last day in the non-exempt position and at the hourly rate for the non-exempt position assignment.

## 2.19 Employee Termination/Separation

When an employee desires to leave employment, the County requests that they submit a written letter of resignation and provide at least 14 days' notice when possible. At the discretion of the Elected Official or Department Head, the resignation may be accepted immediately or at any time within the resignation notice period.

If you terminate employment with Williamson County, your last active day is the last day you work in person at your usual place of employment (unless you are on paid administrative leave pending an investigation. If that is the case, then your last day will be the date on which a final determination is made following the investigation). In the event that an employee passes away, the last date of active duty will be their date of death. If the date of death occurs on the last day of the pay period, any health plan covered dependents will receive 10 days of additional coverage from that date.

Any accrued vacation time, comp time or holiday (banked before October 1, 2014) time balances remaining as of your last day will be paid in a lump sum on your final paycheck. Your final paycheck is processed in the pay period that includes your last day.

It is your responsibility as a departing employee, [whether or not the departure is voluntary](#), to meet with the appropriate representative of the [Human Resources Department](#). The Human Resources Department will provide you with information about retirement and deferred comp plans, as applicable, and payment of accrued leave, if any. You may also discuss insurance issues and the possible extension of benefits.

You must return all Williamson County property immediately upon request or upon termination of employment. You are responsible for items issued to you by Williamson County or in your possession or control. Any items not returned will be documented and the stated value of the item may be deducted from your last paycheck if you have signed a form acknowledging the assignment of these assets to you. Item values are defined in [Section 2.20 Assets and Values](#).

All terminating or retiring employees will receive a paper paycheck for their final pay. Final pay is not available by direct deposit. A final paycheck will be mailed on the pay date to the address on record in the payroll system and cannot be picked up in person.



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- You are encouraged to update your address information in [Oracle Self Service](#) or to submit an address change notice to the Human Resources Department, if necessary, to ensure prompt receipt of your final pay

If you are terminated for a violation of the [Workplace Safety and Security policy](#) and are not allowed on County premises, contact the Human Resources Department by phone at 512.943.1533 or e-mail ([wilco\\_hr@wilco.org](mailto:wilco_hr@wilco.org)) only.

## 2.20 Assets and Values

Different positions within the County require different assets to be assigned to employees. Their value, if not returned upon termination of employment, will be deducted from the employee's final paycheck if the employee has signed a form acknowledging the assignment of these assets.

### Examples include:

**Keys:** Replacement cost of a key is \$3.00 with the exception of a grandmaster key. If someone loses a grandmaster key to an area or building, the replacement cost is established after determining which locks are affected.

**Badges/FOB:** Badges have a \$3.00 replacement charge if they are lost or not returned at the end of employment. The cost for replacing a proximity card (cards with electronic sensors) is \$6.00. In the case of a lost or unreturned fob, the replacement charge is \$5.00. *It is important to report the loss of any badge or key fob so that access can be disabled and a person other than yourself cannot use it.*

**Laptops:** If an employee loses a laptop or fails to return it at termination, the replacement charge will be the average cost of laptop prices for that year.

**Procurement Card:** All charges made that do not follow the policies and procedures as outlined in the Procurement Card Manual will be deducted from the final paycheck.

**Departmental Assets:** Individual departments may internally track assigned assets and associated values specific to their operations. Not all assets are tracked in the Oracle Payroll System. Departments may document departmental assigned assets as they see fit.

## 2.21 Adjusted Service Dates When Rehiring a Former Employee

If you hire a former Williamson County employee within one year (365 days) from his/her last employment termination date, the employee will be reinstated with service time based on a calculated adjusted service date. The adjusted service date is the original date of employment minus the number of break in service days. The adjusted service date will also be used for determining vacation and longevity accrual rates. This adjusted service date calculation is applicable to all current employees and those being hired / rehired after May 23, 2003.



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If you hire a former Williamson County employee after more than one year (365 days) from his/her last employment termination date, the employee will lose all previously accrued service time and must start earning service time from the new date of hire.

Refer to the [Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act \(USERRA\)](#) reemployment rights if the break in service is related to active military leave. Contact the HR Department for assistance.

## **2.22 Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS) Procedures for Re-Hiring Retirees**

The County will not rehire a person with a TCDRS service retirement income from the County or another TCDRS-participating subdivision into a non-temporary position unless the person has been legitimately terminated from the County or other participating subdivision and had a break in service of at least 30 days.

Williamson County elected officials, department heads, or other agents of the County may not make any prior commitments, agreements, or arrangements to rehire a Williamson County TCDRS retiree into a non-temporary position in anticipation of his or her retirement.

After an authentic termination and a 30-day break in service, a Williamson County TCDRS retiree cannot be rehired into a non-temporary position unless the retiree and the hiring authority sign a statement affirming that there were no prior commitments, agreements, or arrangements to rehire the retiree.

A TCDRS retiree rehired into a non-temporary position will establish a separate account from the one which the employee is receiving a service retirement annuity.

In emergencies, or when it is in the best interest of the County, a TCDRS retiree may be rehired, without a waiting period, as a temporary employee for a period not to exceed 130 calendar days. A retiree working as a temporary employee cannot be moved to a non-temporary position unless:

- The retiree and the hiring authority sign a statement affirming that there were no commitments, agreements, or arrangements to rehire the retiree into a non-temporary position prior to the retiree's original termination
- The retiree had at least a 30 day break in service before being hired as a temporary employee





# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## 2.23 Court Administrator Vacancy (District and CCL Courts)

When a Court Administrator vacancy occurs in the District or County Court at Law Courts, the position can only be filled as a Court Administrator I (one) unless the selected applicant is a current Court Administrator/Coordinator for Williamson County. Below are the Court Administrator titles with corresponding required years of experience:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Required Dist/CCL Exp</u>	<u>PG</u>
Court Admin I CCL/Dist	1 yr or no exp Wilco	22
Court Admin II CCL/Dist	3 yrs Court Admin Exp Wilco	24
Court Admin III CCL/Dist	5 yrs Court Admin Exp Wilco	26
Court Admin IV CCL/Dist	7 yrs Court Admin Exp Wilco	28



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## **3. Time-keeping Policies**

The time-keeping policies for Williamson County outline the procedure for documenting hours, how to take leave, who qualifies for leave, and other County regulations as they relate to pay. Wages, leave time, and documenting your pay all depend on your employee classification.

The [Fair Labor Standards Act \(FLSA\)](#) requires employers to classify jobs as either exempt or nonexempt. The exemption status of employees determines how compensation is structured, and eligibility for overtime pay. In general, regardless of the amount of hours worked, exempt employees receive a set salary. Nonexempt employees receive hourly pay and are eligible for comp time or overtime.

### **3.01 Position Classification**

***Exempt Positions:*** Job duties define whether an employee is exempt, not job title. The FLSA states several defined categories to determine exempt status. Each category is technically defined by the [Department of Labor](#). Exempt positions are not eligible for overtime pay and they receive a salary.

***Nonexempt Positions:*** Employees falling under the category of nonexempt are paid hourly and are eligible for comp time or overtime pay.

The County has and continues to carefully consider the classifications of its many jobs. If you have questions about your job's classification please contact Human Resources.

### **3.02 Payroll Status**

***Full-time:*** The County budget must authorize full time positions.

***Part-time:*** Based on hours and days worked, part-time employees are classified in non-exempt positions and:

- may work more than 130 days in a calendar year
- are paid on an hourly basis
- must participate in the TCDRS retirement system
- Part-time employees who work 20 hours a week or more are eligible for 50% longevity pay accruals based on the longevity schedule
- Part-time employees are further defined as follows for benefits and leave time eligibility reasons:
  - Employees who work 30 or more hours per week and are eligible for health insurance and 75% leave time accruals
  - Employees who work between 20 – 29 hours per week and are only eligible for 50% leave time accruals



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



- Employees who work less than 20 hours per week and are not eligible for benefits or leave time

**Temporary:** A person hired to work for no more than 130 calendar days in a calendar year, regardless of hours worked per day or per week, is temporary.

### 3.03 Bi-weekly Pay

- Payday is every other Friday
- Paychecks consist of two weeks' pay ending on the Thursday of the previous week
- Payday is the last working day prior to any holiday that falls on a Friday
- Pay advances are not authorized under any circumstance

### 3.04 Work Week- *Effective March 28, 2014*

The official work week for County departments, with the exception of the [911 Emergency Communications department](#), is seven consecutive 24 hour periods starting at 12:00 a.m. Friday and ending 11:59 p.m. Thursday.

The official work week for the 911 Emergency Communications department is seven consecutive 24 hour periods starting at 6:00 a.m. Friday and ending at 5:59 a.m. the following Friday.

### 3.05 Work Scheduling

The work schedules of each department are determined by the official responsible for overseeing the department and are established according to their work requirements and pertinent regulations.

### 3.06 Breaks

Supervisors schedule breaks to accommodate operating requirements. County offices are encouraged to stay open during the noon hour to better serve the public. Your supervisor will inform you of your breaks, if any, and break schedule. The [Fair Labor Standards Act \(FLSA\) does not require employers to provide breaks or meal periods to employees](#).

- Rest periods of less than 20 minutes will not require the employee to punch out and will be considered [compensable time](#)
- Breaks of more than 30 minutes (i.e. errands or lunch) will require non-exempt employees to punch out and not to perform any work during that time
- Only [lactation breaks](#) per the federal healthcare reform law must be provided.. Employers are not required under the FLSA to compensate nursing mothers for breaks taken for the purpose of expressing milk. However, where employers already provide compensated breaks, an employee who uses that break time to express milk must be compensated in the same way that other employees are compensated for break time.



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual

For clarification on whether your break time will be paid or unpaid, please speak with your supervisor.

- For lactation breaks, non-public and suitable space must be provided for employees who are nursing mothers for up to a year after childbirth

## 3.07 Overtime – Non-Exempt Positions

Except as provided below, the work period for purposes of calculations under the FLSA is seven days. Generally, [nonexempt](#) employees may only work 40 hours during a pay week without incurring comp time / overtime.

- Overtime is 1.5 times your regular hourly rate for each hour that you work over forty
- Employees must seek authorization from their supervisor before working any overtime
- Typically, the County elects to provide compensatory time in lieu of paid overtime, in accordance with 29 U.S. Code § 207 (o), with the occasional exception of public safety or emergency situations. This allows you to save hours that you can use as authorized paid leave later. For each hour worked over 40, you will accrue 1.5 hours of compensatory time with the exception of those positions noted in section [3.10 Overtime Eligibility at a Glance](#). Also see section [3.11 for Overtime Eligibility Detailed Information](#)
- Law enforcement officers and corrections officers have an 85 hour work period

## 3.08 Overtime – Exempt Positions

[Exempt](#) employees receive a salary for their work, irrespective of how many or few hours they work in the work week. Thus, exempt employees do not qualify for overtime pay. As long as you average 40 hours per pay week, your department head may allow flexible hours and that could occasionally result in full pay for a week that you worked less than 40 hours. In order to maintain the FLSA exempt status of a position, hour for hour comp time must not be granted.

**Example:** *A felony prosecutor puts in 60 hours during a jury trial week and the DA lets him/her take 2 days off a few weeks later; he/she gets no extra compensation for the long week, but (at the discretion of the DA) the short week is not charged against his/her accrued paid leave.*

Keeping in mind that hour for hour comp time must not be granted for employees in [exempt](#) positions, offices and departments are encouraged to reduce the comp time balances for any exempt employee as soon as possible. Any remaining comp time balance for an exempt employee will not be paid out upon termination of employment.



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## 3.09 General Rules Regarding Overtime:

- Only hours actually worked count toward the overtime calculation. Holiday, vacation, sick leave, emergency leave, floating holidays, compensatory time, and any other form of paid leave does not contribute to the total number of hours worked in a work period
- You need permission from a supervisor to work on a County holiday or outside regular working hours. Hours worked without authorization will be paid but may result in discipline or termination for not obtaining authorization
- Employees may not -volunteerll work time

**Example:** *You are sick on Monday but get permission to work eight extra hours later in the week. You will not be charged with sick leave since you are making up the eight hours (with permission).*

**Example:** *You are sick on Monday and work an extra eight hours without permission. You will be charged with eight hours of sick leave and accrue no compensatory time.*

- Department heads control overtime, holiday banking and compensatory time to avoid creating an excess liability for the County. The Commissioners' Court is not required to amend the budget for payment of unnecessary overtime compensation or for hiring any additional employees while the regular employees are taking their compensatory time. You are encouraged to take any accrued compensatory time as soon as you possibly can, rather than allowing it to accumulate. Department heads and supervisors may instruct an employee to take banked holiday time in lieu of vacation or other time as a means to control this liability.

**Example:** *Five employees, each with 80 hours of accrued compensatory time, quit a department at once; the department head may have to do without any replacements for ten work periods or risk running out of salary money before the end of the fiscal year.*

- Employees who are trained peace or corrections officers, primarily involved in law enforcement or corrections activities, have a 14-day work period. Nonexempt employees in these categories may work 85 hours during a work period without incurring overtime

## 3.10 Overtime Eligibility at a Glance:

*Please see below for more detailed information regarding overtime compensation.*



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



Employee Classification	Eligible for overtime?	How is overtime accrued?
Exempt	No	Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime compensation
Nonexempt	Yes	Time and a half compensatory time after 40 hours worked
Nonexempt Department of Infrastructure	Yes	Time and a half compensatory time after 40 hours worked. In the event of a public safety emergency, the Senior Director has the discretion to grant overtime pay at time and a half to those employees performing emergency response duty at the request of their supervisor
Nonexempt Employees working as Juvenile Detention or Academy Officers, Department of 911 Emergency Communications or as Emergency Medical Services (EMS),MOT, RCS,Emergency Services, Radio Shoo	Yes	Time and a half overtime pay after 40 hours worked
Nonexempt Law Enforcement Officers and Corrections Officers	Yes	Time and a half overtime pay or compensatory time after 85 hours worked in a combined two week work period
Nonexempt Sheriff's Office Crime Scene and Crime Scene Technician Employees	Yes	Time and a half compensatory time after 40 hours worked or, at the discretion of the Sheriff, overtime pay at the rate of 1.5 times your hourly rate
Only hours actually worked are included in the determination of overtime. Sick leave, vacation leave, holidays, and other absences from the work place do not count toward the accrual of overtime. As used above, time and one half pay may refer to accruals of compensatory time or overtime payments.		

## 3.11 Overtime Eligibility Detailed Information

Typically, the County elects to provide compensatory time in lieu of paid overtime with the occasional exception of public safety emergency response situations or for those nonexempt positions directly involved in public safety activities on a daily basis.

**Nonexempt:** Department Heads and Elected Officials have the discretion to grant overtime pay or compensatory time on an as needed basis to the department, as long as they do not exceed their budgeted overtime line item.

**Nonexempt Department of Infrastructure:** In the event of a public safety emergency, the Senior Director of Infrastructure has the discretion to grant overtime pay at time and a half to those employees performing emergency response duty at the request of their supervisor.

**Nonexempt Employees working as Juvenile Detention or Academy Officers, Dispatchers and Shift Supervisors in the Department of Emergency Communications, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) paramedics, lieutenants, captains, or commanders, MOT, RCS, Emergency**



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



**Services and Radio Shop:** You will receive paid overtime at the rate of 1.5 times your hourly rate for every hour worked over 40 in a work week.

**Nonexempt Law Enforcement Officers and Corrections Officers employed by the Sheriff's Department, Constable's Offices, County Attorney and District Attorney's offices:** You may work an 85-hour work period paid at regular salary before time and a half. The County Judge and Commissioners' Court may limit or suspend paid overtime, at their discretion, in lieu of compensatory time. For each hour in excess of 85, compensatory time will accrue at time and a half. At the discretion of the County Judge or the Commissioners' Court, you may be allowed a combination of compensatory accrual and paid overtime.

**Nonexempt Sheriff's Office Crime Scene and Crime Scene Technician Employees:** At the discretion of the Sheriff, you will earn the equivalent of 1.5 hours of compensatory time for every hour worked over forty hours in a work week or overtime pay at the rate of 1.5 times your hourly rate for every hour worked over 40 hours in a work week.

## 3.12 Infrastructure Department Working Four Ten-Hour Days (Monday-Thursday)

Employees working four ten-hour days shall work Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. This schedule may be changed to Tuesday through Friday at the discretion of the supervisor. Additionally, if you are an infrastructure employee, you may perform emergency response duty at the request of your supervisor. Emergency response duty can occur on any day of the week.

## 3.13 Reporting Time Worked and Leave Time

**Nonexempt:** You must enter all hours and leave time into [Kronos](#), the time-clock program used by County employees. You must note the beginning and end of shifts and accurately document split shifts that result in time away from work for personal reasons.

**Exempt:** You do not need to enter the hours you work, only leave time such as sick, holiday, vacation, and FMLA.

- You must report all authorized paid leave to supervisors at the end of that pay period
- Supervisors must approve comp time / overtime and working on a County holiday

## 3.14 Tampering with a Governmental Record

All Williamson County employees' Kronos time records are deemed to be a governmental record. According to [Texas Penal Code, Section 37.10](#), you are tampering with a governmental record if you inaccurately enter your time information.





# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## 3.15 Payroll Processing Requirements

- It is both yours and your supervisor's responsibility to certify the accuracy of time submitted for pay (including documentation of leave). You must provide accurate record of your time for your supervisor to confirm
- The department head (or their designee) will review your reported time
- The Payroll Department needs the approved reports no later than 9:00 a.m., one week prior to payday
- Corrections or additions to Payroll of 16 hours or less will not be processed until the following pay period

Any timekeeping that is incorrect or omitted should be resubmitted by the end of the next period.



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## **4. Leave Policies**

**If an employee is on unpaid leave for any reason other than FMLA, they are responsible for the payment of the employee portion of their benefit premiums in advance. (i.e. benefits for May must be paid for in April). See policy # 4.22.17 for additional information related to unpaid FMLA leave benefit continuation.**

### **4.01 Notification of Absences**

Regular attendance is important to the overall operation of a department or office. If you are unable to report for work, notify your supervisor immediately, unless extraordinary circumstances make notification impossible. If your supervisor is unavailable, you should notify another management person in your department. Include the reason for your absence or tardiness and an indication of when you can be expected to report to work.

If you are not able to notify a management person in your department, you will need to call back. Calls made by someone else on your behalf (spouse or otherwise) to your supervisor are not acceptable unless you are physically unable to call for yourself. At all times, you are expected to give honest and truthful reasons for absences and tardiness. Notification does not necessarily excuse the absence. Failure to provide proper notification may result in suspension or other disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

If a department has a specific policy for notification of absences, that policy overrides this statement.

If you are absent from work for three consecutive regular shifts, without giving proper notice, you will be considered to have abandoned your job and to have voluntarily resigned.

### **4.02 Types of Leave**

**4.02.01 Authorized Paid Leave:** includes holiday, sick leave, vacation, compensatory time, emergency leave, floating holiday, military leave, civil leave, essential personnel leave, bad weather leave and all similar forms of compensation.

Williamson County cannot legally pay you for un-worked hours that do not qualify as authorized paid leave or for hours accrued in excess of the maximum amount allowed in your leave banks. For more information, see [Appendix A](#).

**4.02.02 Unpaid Leave:** includes Family and Medical Leave not reported in conjunction with authorized paid leave, non-law enforcement worker's compensation leave, some USERRA military leave, leave without pay and administrative leave without pay.

Employees who need to report unpaid leave may have an attendance problem. The Human Resources Department does not recommend allowing an employee to enter unpaid leave status, unless it is in conjunction with Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Worker's Compensation, USERRA or administrative leave without pay. Departments are encouraged to contact HR to discuss any potential unpaid leave issues.



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## 4.03 Authorized Paid Leave Rules Summary

See [Appendix C](#) – Summary of Authorized Paid Leave Type Rules

## 4.04 Adjustments to Leave Time

Sick leave, holiday time, vacation, compensatory time and other authorized paid leave can be applied to your work week only up to forty hours. In other words, you cannot use leave time to gain compensatory time or overtime pay.

Leave time is used in the following order: holiday time, vacation, compensatory time, sick leave.

**Example:** You are assigned a non-exempt position and work a regular eight-hour daily schedule and, with permission, decide to take vacation on Monday. If you work an extra six hours by Thursday, (before the start of a new work period) you will only be charged for two hours of vacation.

**Example:** You are assigned a non-exempt position and work a regular eight-hour daily schedule and take a Friday vacation day, but on Sunday, you are called to work an emergency ice storm for ten hours. On Tuesday, you have the flu and call out sick. You will not be charged with any sick leave and only six hours of vacation because you made up ten hours on Sunday. Since it is most important to retain sick leave balances, your leave time was subtracted from vacation hours.

## 4.05 Adjustments to Leave Time – After 10/1/12 for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Employees Only

After 10/1/12, adjustments to leave time for [EMS](#) paramedics, lieutenants, captains and commanders will not be made to retain sick leave balances when an EMS paramedic, lieutenant, captain or commander works additional hours outside of their regular schedule with permission of their supervisor. The leave time is compensated at straight time regardless of the number of actual hours worked in the work week.

## 4.06 Reporting Leave Time

- If you are regularly scheduled more than 40 hours in a work period, your sick time, vacation, holiday time, and compensatory time are charged against the actual hours scheduled during a regular shift



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual

**Example:** An EMS employee takes leave time for a regular 24-hour shift. Within the same pay week, the employee picks up a 24-hour shift that is not regularly assigned to them. The leave time is paid at straight time regardless of the number of actual hours worked in the work period and overtime at time-and-a-half is paid for any hours actually worked over forty.

- You can bank and use holiday hours later if it is determined that you must work a County holiday. If you get permission to work a holiday from your supervisor, the County encourages you to try to take another day off later in the week. You can accrue a maximum of 200 hours of holiday time. Banked holidays accrued on or after 10/01/2014 will not be paid upon termination. In lieu of overtime pay, compensatory time is routinely given. You can accrue a maximum of 240 compensatory hours (at time and a half). After 240 hours of accrued compensatory time, overtime pay is given. Compensatory time must be used before vacation time.

If your supervisor determines that you must work a holiday, the Payroll Department converts pay hour-by-hour to flat rate holiday time. You will bank holiday time for later use, banked holidays accrued on or after 10/01/2014 will not be paid upon termination.

Elections Department employees who are eligible for payment under elections services contracts are paid 1.5 times their hourly rate for every hour worked over 40 in a work period (for services performed under contract on behalf of another political subdivision).

## 4.07 Reporting Leave for Infrastructure Department Employees Working Four Ten-Hour Days Schedule

The following are the rules for leave time and usage for [Infrastructure Department](#) employees on a four ten-hour day's schedules:

- Vacation  
A single day of vacation leave requires ten hours of accrual
- Sick Leave  
A single day of sick leave requires ten hours of sick leave accrual
- Holidays

Eight hours of holiday leave will be credited to the employee for each County recognized holiday occurring within the pay period. A single holiday taken requires ten holiday or vacation hours of accrual.

**Example 1:** A holiday occurs on a Friday. You accrue eight hours of holiday time but do not charge holiday time since you are not scheduled to work on Friday.



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**Example 2:** A holiday occurs on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. You accrue eight hours of holiday time but must charge 10 hours of accrued holiday or other leave time.

## 4.08 Vacation Time

- Vacation accrual will continue as long as you are on paid leave; once you have expended all paid leave (vacation, sick leave, comp time,) accrual will cease until you return to work
- Employees on shift work may take vacation one shift at a time instead of consecutively (with approval of the official or department head)
- Vacation leave can only be taken with prior approval of the official, department head, or supervisor, as appropriate
- Vacation will be accrued on the timekeeping system. If you reach maximum accrual, no further vacation will be accrued until you have taken the vacation hours that you already have
- No vacation time may be -boughtll without prior approval of the Commissioners' Court; however, to encourage employees to give advance notice of their separation, employees who leave County employment will be paid for their accrued untaken vacation as of the date of termination. Vacation paid at termination is computed at the rate of pay earned as of the last date of employment
- If you transfer to/from Williamson County, the [Williamson County and Cities Health District \(WCCHD\)](#) and the [Community Supervision and Corrections Department \(CSCD/Adult Probation\)](#), you will be paid for your accrued, untaken vacation as of the date of transfer so that your balance does not become a liability for the new department
- All vacation accruals will be prorated based on your hire date and your termination date

**Example:** if a new employee only works one week during a normal two-week pay period, they will accrue  $\frac{1}{2}$  or 3.08/2 or 1.54 hours of vacation at the last period worked.

- If you terminate employment with Williamson County and are rehired within one year, your vacation accrual is reinstated at the rate you were receiving upon termination. This excludes anyone being paid under the tenure plan at the time employment is terminated
- [Exempt](#) employees may be required to use accrued leave for vacation, even if the leave is for less than one day. Leave will not be charged or pay reduced if the employee has worked at least eighty hours in the current pay period



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- Employees on shift work must take vacation leave at a rate equal with their assigned shift; they may take one shift at a time instead of taking multiple shifts consecutively, with the approval of their department head
- The Texas Constitution prohibits gifts to public employees for hours not worked, or not covered by earned leave. The [Fair Labor Standards Act, in 29 CFR 541.710](#), allows public employers to make deductions from the pay of exempt employees for partial-day absences, when such employees can no longer be compensated like other employees from approved leave banks. Therefore, payments to exempt employees who no longer have accrued leave would be a -gift and in the interest of public accountability, Williamson County will reduce the pay of an exempt employee for partial-day and other absences when an exempt employee has no accrued leave from which to be compensated
- Each official or department head is responsible for the accurate reporting of all time worked by each employee and of all holidays, vacation leave, sick leave, civil leave and other leave

Any elected official's full-time employees, non-elected department heads and full-time employees, accrue vacation hours as follows:

<b>Vacation Accrual: Full Time Employees</b>			
	<b>0 to 4.99 Years of Service</b>	<b>5 to 9.99 Years of Service</b>	<b>10+ years of Service</b>
<b>Pay Period Accruals</b>	3 hours, 5 minutes	4 hours, 37 minutes	6 hours, 10 minutes
<b>Annual Accruals</b>	80 hours (10 days)	120 hours (15 days)	160 hours (20 days)
<b>Maximum Accruals and Carry-Over Balances</b>	80 hours	120 hours	160 hours
<b>Vacation Accrual: EMS Employees on Shift Work (48, 56, and 64 Hour Shifts)</b>			
	<b>0 to 9.99 Years of Service</b>	<b>10+ Years of Service</b>	
<b>Pay Period Accruals</b>	5 hours, 32 minutes	6 hours, 27 minutes	
<b>Annual Accruals</b>	144 hours (6 shifts)	168 hours (7 shifts)	
<b>Maximum Accruals and Carry-Over Balances</b>	144 hours	168 hours	Once maximum accrual is reached, no further vacation hours will accrue

Vacation time in excess of maximum accrual and carry over levels is lost and will not be paid, prorated or otherwise, to the employee.

## 4.09 Sick Leave

- Any elected official's full-time employees, non-elected department heads and full-time employees accrue 13 days of sick leave per fiscal year



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- With the exception of EMS employees on shift work, employees will accrue four hours of sick leave per pay period. EMS employees on shift work (48, 56, and 64 hour shifts,) will accrue six hours of sick leave per pay period. Sick leave hours will be accrued on the timekeeping system
- With the exception of EMS employees on shift work, paid sick leave is cumulative up to sixty days (480 hours). For EMS employees on shift work (48, 56, and 64 hour shifts), paid sick leave is cumulative up to 28 hour shifts (672 hours)
- Part-time  $\geq 20$  hour employees may accrue sick leave equivalent to half the accrual for full-time employees

**Example:** *those employees working greater than 20 hours, but less than 30, per week are entitled to an accrual of 2.0 hours per pay period of sick leave.*

- Part-time  $\geq 30$  hour employees may accrue sick leave equivalent to 3/4 the accrual for full time employees

**Example:** *those employees working greater than 30 hours, but less than 40, per week are entitled to an accrual of 3.0 hours per pay period of sick leave.*

- Part-time employees who are regularly scheduled for less than 20 hours per week (including seasonal staff) do not accrue sick leave
- Temporary employees do not accrue sick leave
- Sick leave cannot be bought. If you leave County employment, you will not be paid for unused accrued sick leave. If you transfer to/from Williamson County, [the Williamson County and Cities Health District \(WCCHD\)](#) and the [Community Supervision and Corrections Department \(CSCD/Adult Probation\)](#), you will also not be paid for your unused accrued sick leave. Your sick leave balance will be reset to zero and all accrued sick leave will be forfeited upon transfer in order to prevent your balance from becoming a liability for your new department
- Sick leave may only be used for sickness and medical and dental appointments you, or your immediate family (family members as defined in the [Family and Medical leave Act policy](#) adopted by Commissioners' Court) or for paid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act. It is not an alternative form of vacation leave. Sick leave may not be converted to another form of leave to avoid entering unpaid leave status
- All sick accruals will be pro-rated based on your hire date. For example, if you only work one week during the normal two-week pay period, you will accrue  $\frac{1}{2}$  or 4.00/2, or 2.00 hours of sick time on your last pay period worked



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- Employees on shift work must take sick leave at a rate equal to their assigned shift; they may take one shift at a time instead of taking multiple shifts consecutively, with the approval of their department head
- You may be required to provide certification from a health professional stating that an absence was necessary and/or that you are fit to return to work. The County may also request additional medical opinions to verify leave or fitness for work. You may continue to be paid from your sick leave during any delays in returning to work that may occur
- The Texas Constitution prohibits gifts to public employees for hours not worked, or not covered by earned leave. The [Fair Labor Standards Act, in 29 CFR 541.710](#), allows public employers to make deductions from the pay of exempt employees for partial-day absences, when they can no longer be compensated like other employees from approved leave banks. Payments to exempt employees who no longer have accrued leave would be a -gift and in the interest of public accountability, Williamson County will reduce the pay of an exempt employee for partial-day and other absences when they have no more accrued leave from which to be compensate
- Each official or department head is responsible for the accurate reporting of all time worked by each employee and of all holidays, vacation leave, sick leave, civil leave, and other leave

## 4.10 Compensatory Time or Comp Time

For [non-exempt](#) positions that are not law enforcement or corrections positions, comp time at time and one half is granted for any hours actually worked over 40 hours. County officials, department heads and supervisors are responsible for permitting additional non-scheduled hours and ensuring that expenditures for salaries do not exceed their approved salary budgets in any fiscal year.

If an employee assignment changes from a [non-exempt to an exempt position](#), the employee's current comp time balance will be paid out as of the last day in the non-exempt position and at the hourly rate for the non-exempt position assignment. Department heads and supervisors may instruct employees to use compensatory time before vacation time.

Keeping in mind that hour for hour comp time must not be granted for employees in [exempt](#) positions, offices and departments are encouraged to reduce the comp time balances for any exempt employee as soon as possible. Any remaining comp time balance for an exempt employee will not be paid out upon termination of employment.

## 4.11 Holidays

The Commissioners' Court establishes holidays for each fiscal year. Holidays are subject to change.

- Departments that have regularly assigned shifts award holiday time to all employees equally, whether the holiday was worked or not. One day is equal to one shift of paid holiday time. EMS is granted holiday time in 12 hour shifts



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**Example:** *If some deputies are scheduled for Monday, Wednesday, and Friday during the week of Memorial Day, while others are scheduled for Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, all of them receive the same amount of paid holiday time, even though only half of them worked on the holiday itself, Monday.*

- This holiday time should normally be scheduled and taken within the pay period when the regular holiday occurs (and preferably on the holiday itself). All departments are responsible for ensuring that holiday time is accurately reported as taken.

Employees who are not normally scheduled to work on a holiday must get advance permission from their supervisor to work on a holiday. Supervisory approval from the County Judge is required for Department heads and appointed officials who report to the Commissioner's Court. Hours worked without authorization will be paid, but may result in discipline or termination for not obtaining authorization.

You can bank and use holiday hours later if it is determined, in advance by your supervisor, that you must work a County holiday. If you get permission to work a holiday from your supervisor, the County encourages you to try to take another day off later in the week. You can accrue a maximum of 200 hours of holiday time. Banked holidays accrued on or after 10/01/2014 will not be paid upon termination.

- Department heads and supervisors can instruct an employee to take holiday time in lieu of vacation or other time as a means to control this liability.
- Sick leave cannot be entered on a scheduled holiday even if you or an eligible family member is sick

## 4.12 Floating Holiday

Eligible full-time employees receive one floating holiday per fiscal year. With prior approval of their supervisor, floating holidays may be taken according to policy.



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## **4.13 Emergency/Bereavement Leave**

Any official or department head may grant paid emergency leave, up to 2 days per fiscal year, for a full time employee. Emergency leave may be granted for only one of the following:

- funeral of relative or close friend
- An employees' auto accident, or emergency repairs of an employees' home or auto(s). A utility outage disrupting electrical service or water service to an employee's home does not qualify for emergency leave. Another form of paid leave should be taken for these absences

## **4.14 Civil Leave**

### **4.14.01 Time Off to Vote**

Williamson County encourages you to participate in the political process by voting in federal, state, and local elections. Due to the early voting opportunities afforded citizens, you usually do not need time off work to vote; however, supervisors may approve time off in unusual circumstances. Verification of need to be off may be required by departments. Under state law, if the polls are open for two consecutive hours outside of an employee's working hours, an employer is not required to release the employee from work in order to vote. Otherwise, employees may be allowed to leave work to vote. Their time off will be without pay or they may use appropriate accrued leave time or compensatory time.

### **4.14.02 Jury Duty**

Williamson County encourages employees to serve on jury duty when summoned. Employees must show the jury duty summons to their supervisor as soon as possible so that the supervisor may make arrangements to accommodate the absence. Employees are expected to report for work whenever the court schedule permits. County employees are also eligible for juror checks and may keep such remuneration in addition to the County pay for jury duty.

### **4.14.03 Serving as a Witness**

If you receive a summons for a work related subpoena to serve as a witness, it should be reviewed with your supervisor and appropriate arrangements made to allow you to comply with the stated work related requirements.



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## 4.15 Private Litigation

If an employee is absent from work to appear in private litigation in which he/she is a principal party, the time off will be charged to vacation or leave without pay. For an extended leave of this type, the County is not required to hold the employee's position. An employee may be terminated if business necessity requires that the position be filled to maintain operations.

## 4.16 Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) Military Leave

The first 15 days of military leave in each fiscal year will be paid without -loss of time, vacation, or salary. All military leave after the first 15 days is considered -unpaid leave. Those individuals on military leave may choose to use vacation time, compensatory time, or holiday time to compensate for a portion of this unpaid leave. Because military leave laws have been subject to recent and frequent updates in the last several years, you should always check with and coordinate your leave with Human Resources for the most up to date and individualized leave benefits.

[USERRA](#) provides that returning service members are to be reemployed in the job that they would have attained had they not been absent for military service, (the "escalator" principle), with the same seniority, status and pay, as well as other rights and benefits determined by seniority. USERRA also requires that reasonable efforts (such as training or retraining) be made to enable returning service members to qualify for reemployment. If the service member cannot qualify for the "escalator" position, he or she must be reemployed, if qualified, in any other position that is the nearest approximation to the escalator position and then to the pre-service position. USERRA also provides that while an individual is performing military service, he or she is deemed to be on a furlough or leave of absence and is entitled to the non-seniority rights accorded other similarly-situated individuals on non-military leaves of absence.

The time limits for returning to work are as follows:

- **Less than 31 days service:** By the beginning of the first regularly scheduled work period after the end of the calendar day of duty, plus time required to return home safely and an eight hour rest period. If this is impossible or unreasonable, then as soon as possible.
- **31 to 180 days:** The employee must apply for reemployment no later than 14 days after completion of military service. If this is impossible or unreasonable through no fault of the employee, then as soon as possible.
- **181 days or more:** The employee must apply for reemployment no later than 90 days after completion of military service.
- **Service-connected injury or illness:** Reporting or application deadlines are extended for up to two years for persons who are hospitalized or convalescing.

Health and pension plan coverage for service members is also addressed by USERRA. Individuals performing military duty of more than 30 days may elect to continue employer sponsored health care for up to 24 months; however, they may be required to pay up to 102 percent of the full premium. For military service of less than 31 days, health care coverage is provided as if the



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service member had remained employed. USERRA pension protections apply to defined benefit plans and defined contribution plans as well as plans provided under federal or state laws governing pension benefits for government employees. For purposes of pension plan participation, vesting, and accrual of benefits, USERRA treats military service as continuous service with the employer.

## **4.17 Administrative Leave**

For investigations, disciplinary or other reasons, you may be placed on paid or unpaid administrative leave.

## **4.18 Other Leave**

Extra holidays, bad weather days, public disasters, official funerals and similar occasions that involve the suspension of all routine County business may only be declared by the County Judge or his designated representative.

The procedures for paying essential, nonessential, and regular part-time employees in cases of severe weather closing may also be applied when County offices are officially closed for other reasons such as funerals or non-weather-related emergencies.

## **4.19 Bad Weather Leave Time during Closures of County Offices**

- After an event that requires official County office closure, the supervisor/timekeeper will record the hours used by each employee in Kronos using the “bad weather” leave type
- Only employees who are scheduled to work during the time when County offices are closed are eligible to report bad weather leave time. If you are not scheduled to work during the official County office closure period, do not report bad weather leave time on your time card
- All essential personnel, as identified in the [Workplace Safety and Security Policy](#), who do not work during a severe weather closing must contact their supervisors immediately upon the County’s declaration of a severe weather closing
- If the leave event or emergency is prolonged beyond seven days, the Commissioners’ Court or department head may, at their discretion, place employees whose services are not required on unpaid leave (in which case you may use any individual accrued paid leave to continue your paycheck)



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- You are expected to be at work as long as County offices are open, unless there are special circumstances, distinct from those affecting other employees, which make your travel or attendance unsafe. Employees should always exercise due care for their safety and should not report to work if doing so would create an unreasonable or unacceptable risk. This includes instances when your school district closes or has a delayed start time due to weather conditions. If you are delayed reporting to work for your regularly scheduled shift when County offices are open, you will need to use one of the following leave types to receive pay for this time: vacation, holiday, compensatory time, floating holiday, or emergency leave (if applicable based on the definition of emergency leave). If you do not have one of these types of leave available, you may be required to use leave without pay (LWOP) for this absence
- If you have vacation time or sick leave time scheduled and the County has declared bad weather time and closed all offices, then you may enter bad weather time for those hours and reserve your vacation or sick accruals

## **4.20 Essential Personnel (EP) Leave Related to Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Activation When County Offices are Closed**

Upon EOC activation and/or declaration of local, state or federal disaster [or upon modification of County business hours by the County Judge](#), essential personnel (EP) (as defined by the [Williamson County Workplace Safety and Security Policy](#)), is paid or accrues leave as follows:

- All nonexempt essential personnel may receive time and one half in lieu of compensatory time once they have exceeded 40 hours worked in a pay week
- Essential personnel who are exempt will be given EP leave to be used at the discretion of the official or department head, as departmental budgets allow. EP leave will be paid in the same amounts as holiday leave, but will not carry over to the next fiscal year. In order to provide this EP leave, all hours must be tracked and documented for exempt staff and forwarded to the payroll department

## **4.21 Workers' Compensation**

- The [County carries insurance](#) to cover approved costs for [work-incurred injury or illness](#). Workers' comp benefits, if approved, help pay for your medical treatment and part of any income that may be lost. The worker's compensation system prescribes specific benefits based on the type of injury and work time lost
- In compliance with the [Texas Workers' Compensation Insurance Act](#), all Williamson County employees are provided workers' compensation coverage. Newly hired employees may elect to opt out of our workers compensation coverage if they provide written notice to the Human Resources Department within 5 days of their hire date



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- The Williamson County Human Resources Department will report all injuries to the County's workers' compensation provider as they are reported. Claims for lost time are forwarded to the [Texas Department of Insurance – Division of Workers' Compensation \(TDI-DWC\)](#). More [information about workers' compensation rights](#) may be obtained from TDI-DWC
- To assist in obtaining coverage, you must report all work-related accidents to the appropriate supervisor immediately. The supervisor must then notify the Human Resources Department as soon as possible. The Human Resources Department must notify the workers' compensation carrier within eight days from the date of injury. Along with the report of injury, an accident investigation report should also be submitted
- Based on Texas Worker's Compensation rules and regulations, the first seven (7) calendar days of lost work time due a workers' compensation injury are unpaid for non-law enforcement employees. Non-law enforcement employees may report sick leave in order to have paid leave during this initial period. If insufficient sick leave is available to cover this absence, vacation time may be used. If lost work time continues past the first seven (7) days, a non-law enforcement employee will begin receiving temporary income benefits (TIBS) paid directly from the workers compensation carrier for up to twenty four (24) months or until the employee is released to return to work on either a light-duty or full-duty basis, whichever comes first. Law enforcement employees will receive continued salary income paid via Williamson County payroll processing during lost work time due to a workers' compensation injury

## **4.22 Family and Medical Leave Act / Military Family & Medical Leave**

In accordance with the [Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993](#), and as revised January 16, 2009 and March 8, 2013, Williamson County has established the following policy:

### **4.22.01 FMLA**

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) was established to balance the needs of the workplace with the needs of families, to promote the stability and economic security of families, and to promote national interests in preserving family integrity.

### **4.22.02 Entitlement to Basic FMLA Leave**

The law entitles eligible employees to job-protected, unpaid leave for:

- Birth or adoption of a child
- Placement of a child with you for foster care
- Caring for the serious health condition of your spouse, child, or parent
- Your own serious health condition
- Attending to a qualified exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, child or parent is on covered active duty or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty in the armed forces



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## **4.22.03 Eligible Employees**

There are two basic requirements to be eligible for FMLA purposes:

1. You must have been employed by Williamson County for at least 12 months (not necessarily consecutively). Service that is more than seven years old generally does not count.

Williamson County will base FMLA leave on a -rolling 12-month period, measured backward from the date that you first use FMLA

2. You must have worked for Williamson County at least 1250 hours during the previous 12 months.

## **4.22.04 Leave Requirements**

Williamson County is required to grant up to 12 weeks unpaid leave in any 12-month period for one or more Medical reasons as defined in section 4.22.05 below.

## **4.22.05 Medical Reasons**

There are three (3) types of medical reasons which qualify for FMLA leave:

1. The birth of a child and the care of the child after birth— or the placement of a child for adoption or foster care
  - a. Leave for birth or placement must be within 12 months of birth or placement
  - b. Leave for the birth or placement of a child must be taken all at once
  - c. Leave may begin before the birth, adoption, or placement of child
  - d. If both spouses are employed by Williamson County, the 12 weeks are combined and may be split between the two employees. They are not each entitled to a 12 week leave
  - e. If a legal spouse (not including domestic partnerships) provides pre-natal care, attends appointments, and provides care after birth for the serious health condition of the spouse
2. A serious health condition of a spouse, child, or parent of the employee that involves treatment certified as medically necessary by the Health Care Provider (HCP.)
  - a. An in-law is not considered a parent and is not included as an eligible person
  - b. A spouse is defined as a husband or wife; a domestic partner is not covered by this act (Common-law marriages will need to meet state regulations)
  - c. A child may be any age
  - d. Supporting documentation establishing the employee's eligible relationship to the spouse, child or parent must be provided if not already on file in the HR Department
  - e. Intermittent leave may be taken for care of your spouse, child, or parent for a serious health condition



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3. Your own serious health condition where you are unable to perform your job duties
  - a. For a definite period of time
  - b. On an intermittent basis

A -serious health condition is defined as a physical or mental condition that involves:

1. Inpatient care (overnight stay) in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical facility
2. Continuing treatment as defined below
  - a. If a -medical necessity exists. Medical need for leave, not including voluntary treatments and procedures. If leave is intermittent or reduced schedule, your health care provider must state that such leave is medically necessary and explain why
  - b. If a -period of incapacity exists:
    - i. Duration of incapacity lasting more than three full consecutive calendar days
    - ii. Necessitates in-person treatment at least once within seven days of first day of incapacity
    - iii. Either requires a regimen of continuing treatment initiated by HCP during first treatment or a second in-person visit for treatment (necessity of which determined by HCP) within 30 days of first day of incapacity

#### 4.22.06 Military Family Leave

The FMLA allows you to take up to 14 weeks of additional leave due to a qualifying emergency resulting from a covered family member's active military (or call to active duty) status. This covers your legal spouse, son, daughter, or parent in the National Guard or Reserves.

#### 4.22.07 Entitlement to Military Family Leave

There are two (2) types of Military Family Leave available under the FMLA: Qualifying Exigency Leave and Service member Caregiver Leave. Any period of absence due to or necessitated by USERRA-covered military service *must* be counted in determining an employee's eligibility for FMLA leave.

#### 4.22.08 Qualifying Exigency Leave

Employees meeting the eligibility requirements described under the FMLA policy may be entitled to take their Basic FMLA Leave for a -Qualifying Exigency if the employee's spouse, son, or daughter, or parent is a member of the National Guard, Reserves, or a regular component of the Armed Forces, and on covered active duty or called to covered active duty.

Qualifying exigencies may include:



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- Short-notice deployment when the military member is notified seven or less calendar days prior to deployment. This is limited to 7 days of leave;
- Attending certain military events related to the call to duty;
- To attend to childcare and school activities necessary to arrange for alternative childcare necessitated by the call to duty;
- To attend to certain financial and legal arrangements as a result of the military member's absence while on duty;
- In some instances, to attend counseling arising from the covered active duty or call to covered active duty status of a military member;
- To spend up to 15 days of leave with a military member on a short leave for rest and recuperation;
- To attend post-deployment activities during the 90 days after the termination of the military member's covered active duty status or to address issues related to the death of a military member while on covered active duty;
- To care for a military member's parent who is incapable of self-care when the care is necessitated by the military member's covered active duty, such as to arrange for alternative care for a military member's parent, to provide care on an immediate need basis or to attend meetings with staff at a military member's parent's care facility;
- Other activities arising out of the military member's covered active duty

-Covered active duty means:

- in the case of a member of a regular component of the Armed Forces, duty during the deployment of the member with the Armed Forces to a foreign country; and
- in the case of a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces, duty during the deployment of the member with the Armed Forces to a foreign country under a call or order to covered active duty under a provision of law referred to in section 101(a)(13)(B) of title 10, United States Code

The qualifying exigency leave may commence as soon as the individual receives the call-up notice. This type of leave would be counted toward the employee's 12-week (480 hours) maximum of FMLA leave in a 12-month period.

The county may require certification of the qualifying exigency for military family leave. The employee must respond to such a request within 15 days of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay. Failure to provide certification may result in denial of continuation of leave.

## **4.22.09 Service member Caregiver Leave**

There is also a special leave entitlement that under certain circumstances permits employees who meet the eligibility requirements for FMLA leave to take up to 26 weeks of leave in a single 12-month period to care for their ill or injured spouse, child, parent or next of kin (closest blood relative), who is a covered service member.



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If a husband and wife both work for the county and each wishes to take leave to care for a covered injured or ill service member, the husband and wife may only take a combined total of 26 weeks of leave.

The term -covered service memberll for purposes of Service member Caregiver Leave means:

- a member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves) who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness; or
- a veteran who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, for a serious injury or illness and who was a member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves) at any time during the period of 5 years preceding the first date on which the service member caregiver takes FMLA leave to care for the covered veteran

The term -serious injury or illnessll:

- in the case of a member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves), means an injury or illness that was incurred by the member in the line of duty on covered active duty in the Armed Forces (or existed before the beginning of the member's covered active duty and was aggravated by service in line of duty on covered active duty in the Armed Forces) and that may render the member medically unfit to perform the duties of the member's office, grade, rank, or rating; and
- In the case of a veteran who was a member of the Armed Forces (including a member of the National Guard or Reserves) at any time during a period when the person was a covered service member, means a qualifying (as defined by the Secretary of Labor) injury or illness that was incurred by the member in line of duty on a covered active duty in the Armed Forces (or existed before the beginning of the member's covered active duty and was aggravated by service in line of duty on covered active duty in the Armed Forces) and that manifested itself before or after the member became a veteran.

When both husband and wife work for the county, the aggregate amount of leave that can be taken by the husband and wife to care for a covered service member is 26 weeks in a single 12-month period.

For the purposes of this specific type of FMLA leave, the single 12-month period begins on the first day the eligible team member takes FMLA leave to care for a covered service member and ends 12 months after that date. If an eligible team member does not take all of his or her 26 weeks of leave entitlement to care for a covered service member during this -single 12-month period, the remaining part of his or her 26 workweeks of leave entitlement to care for the covered service member is forfeited. The 26 week leave entitlement is to be applied on a per-covered-service member, per-injury basis.

The 26 weeks of leave includes any Basic FMLA leave taken. However, if the leave qualifies both for Basic FMLA leave and for Service member Caregiver Leave, then the leave will first be designated as Service member Caregiver leave.

The county may require certification for the serious injury or illness of the covered service member. The employee must respond to such request within 15 days of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay. Failure to provide certification may result in a denial of



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continuation of leave.

#### 4.22.10 Check with Human Resources for Updates

Since the laws and regulations governing military leave and military family leave are frequently being changed, if you have any military related leave request, please check with Human Resources to determine eligibility under the then current applicable rules.

#### 4.22.11 Use of Paid Leave / Unpaid Leave

Williamson County will require that you use all of your available accrued paid leave in the following sequence: sick, vacation, essential pay, compensatory, and holiday earned time at the beginning of your designated FMLA leave period. **Emergency leave or floating holiday leave cannot be used while on FMLA.**

After all available paid leave has been taken, you will be placed on unpaid leave for the remainder of your FMLA period unless you are eligible, request and receive a donation from the sick leave pool (SLP); however, if you are on leave while receiving workers' compensation income benefits, you will receive that as your sole compensation (unless law enforcement) and will neither receive County pay nor expend previously accrued leave.

Law enforcement positions continue to receive full pay from the County and the workers' compensation income benefits are payable to the County as partial reimbursement.

- FMLA can run concurrently with lost work time under workers' compensation and may provide for medical insurance continuation if you are receiving workers' comp income benefits

As long as you are on FMLA allowable paid leave or FMLA without pay, your official or department head may not hire another regular, full-time employee to fill your position, unless expressly authorized to do so by the Commissioners' Court. Requests for intermittent leave will be strictly scrutinized to ensure both compliance with FMLA and minimum disruption to the workplace

While on unpaid FMLA, or any other form of unpaid leave, you cannot accrue any vacation or sick leave hours or receive pay for scheduled County holidays

- If you are on FMLA and have -exemptll pay status under FLSA regulations, you will be required to use paid accrued leave to cover the hours you are not at work. Exempt employees will not receive pay while on unpaid FMLA if their accrued leave has been exhausted

#### 4.22.12 Coordination with the Sick Leave Pool (SLP)

If you are placed on unpaid leave, you may be eligible for additional paid time if you are a member of the sick leave pool and are granted additional sick leave time based on the provisions of the [sick leave pool program](#).



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## 4.22.13 Initial Notification Requirements

You must provide your employer at least a 30 day notice before beginning FMLA if the situation is a foreseeable event.

In case of an emergency, notice is required as soon as practicable, generally within 1-2 business days.

When requesting leave for the first time for a particular FMLA-qualifying reason, sufficient information must be provided, dependent on the situation (qualifying reason, explanation for need of leave, provide anticipated timing and duration of leave if foreseeable) to allow the County to reasonably determine whether FMLA will apply. Calling in -sick will not be sufficient.

When subsequently requesting leave for the same FMLA qualifying reason for which leave has previously been provided, you only need to reference the qualifying reason or state -FMLA leave.

When sufficient notice is provided that time off may be for an FMLA event:

- The supervisor or department head as well as HR is required to ask you for any additional necessary information
- You must respond to the supervisor's or HR's request
- You must consult with the supervisor or department head in advance to make a -reasonable effortll to schedule planned treatment so as not to disrupt work operations
- You must advise the supervisor or department head as soon as possible when dates of leave change or become known

If FMLA will be on an intermittent or reduced schedule, Williamson County reserves the right to transfer you to an alternate position, at the same rate of pay, which will more easily accommodate the intermittent/reduced leave schedule.

Williamson County will require you to periodically report on your intent to return to work.

*Note: This leave is not intended to cover any short-term conditions such as minor illnesses that last only a few days or surgical procedures that typically do not involve hospitalization and require only brief recovery periods. If complications arise out of such procedures and they develop into a serious health condition, you are required to notify Williamson County of your intent to go on FMLA.*

Williamson County will notify you when leave is being counted against the FMLA entitlement.

## 4.22.14 Certification and Recertification Requirements

Williamson County requires certification issued by a health care provider to support your request for leave due to serious health conditions. For intermittent FMLA, you will be contacted periodically by Human Resources to provide an updated recertification.

For each request for Military Family Leave, proof of the military member's active duty or military status is required. This proof includes:



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- A copy of the military member's active duty orders or other documentation issued by the military which indicates that the military member is on active duty or call to active duty status in support of a contingency operation
- Proof of dates of the military member's active duty service that coincide with the request for Military Family Leave
- Proof of covered family relationship, if not already documented in Human Resources
- For a qualifying exigency, a signed statement or description of facts for each particular exigency sufficient to show that the reason for leave is indeed a qualifying exigency

After being informed in writing, you must provide this certification or recertification within fifteen (15) calendar days from the post-marked date of the request. An additional fifteen (15) days may be granted to -curell or clarify the information provided. If certification or recertification is not returned at all within thirty (30) days and you have not provided proof of your efforts to provide the certification, leave can be denied. You will be provided with a form to complete for certification purposes.

If certification or recertification is not returned at all within any required fifteen (15)-day cure period (and you have not provided information about your diligent, good faith efforts to do so,) or is timely returned but does not cure the deficiencies, leave can be denied.

Williamson County is not obligated to notify you that a certification or recertification has not been received in the fifteen (15) day periods.

Williamson County also reserves the right to request certification for the return to work or certification that you are unable to return to work after the expiration of the leave due to a serious health condition.

Should Williamson County have a need to authenticate, verify, and/or clarify the validity of your certification, the County may require you to obtain the opinion of a second health care provider approved by the County. The County will pay for the second opinion. In the event of a conflict between the first and second opinions, the County may, at its expense, obtain a third opinion from a health care provider approved jointly by you and the County. The third opinion will be final and binding.

## 4.22.15 Definitions

**Authentication:** Providing the Healthcare Provider (HCP) with a copy of the certification/recertification and requesting verification that the HCP authorized/completed the information contained on the form

**Clarification:** Contacting the HCP to understand the handwriting on the form or to understand the meaning of a response, but does not include asking for information beyond that required by the form

**Significant Change:** includes a pattern of absences before/after scheduled days off. Changes can include longer duration of absences than specified on certification and if the County receives information casting doubt upon your stated reason for absence (-doubtll could include reliable information that your off-duty activities are inconsistent with need for FMLA leave)

Williamson County may also provide your doctor with a record of your absence pattern and ask



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the doctor if the condition and need for leave are consistent with such a pattern.

The County may require that you obtain the subsequent recertification every six (6) months for leave for the same serious health condition.

## 4.22.16 Intermittent Leave

When intermittent leave or a leave on a reduced schedule is requested, Williamson County may also request:

- Certification that includes the dates on which treatment will be required and the duration of the treatment
- Certification that includes a statement of the medical necessity for such leave and its expected duration if FMLA is for your own serious health condition
- For care of an eligible family member, certification must also include a statement that such leave is necessary for the care of the family member who has a serious health condition, or that you will assist in that member's recovery, or be with the family member for psychological support. It should include the expected duration and schedule of leave

## 4.22.17 Health Insurance Continuation

Williamson County will continue group health insurance plan coverage during FMLA periods, including medical, dental, vision, life insurance, and long-term disability policies.

*Note: Vacation and sick leave accrual will continue only as long as you are on paid leave; once you have expended all paid leave, accrual will cease until you return to work.*

When you are on paid leave, you will continue to have your medical premiums deducted from your paycheck. If you are on unpaid leave, you will be responsible for payment of your insurance premiums. You may choose one of the following payment options and will be required to sign a written statement at the beginning of the leave period authorizing the payroll deduction(s) for the delinquent payments:

- Make premium payments directly to the Human Resources Department after you have stopped making premiums through payroll deductions
- Have the outstanding premiums automatically deducted through payroll deduction (per the Human Resource's Department's defined repayment schedule) upon your return to work immediately following FMLA. All outstanding premiums will be repaid within a maximum of six months from the date when you return to paid status

You can choose to discontinue your healthcare coverage while on unpaid FMLA. Your coverage will be reinstated on the same terms prior to leave, without any new qualifying period, when you return.

**Williamson County may discontinue your health care coverage if your required premium is more than 30 days late.**



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## **4.22.18 Right of Recovery**

Williamson County may recover its share of the health care premiums paid to your insurance during any unpaid FMLA pay periods, if you fail to return to work for a reason other than:

- The continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition that would entitle you to FMLA; or
- Other circumstances that are beyond your control, as approved by the county

## **4.22.19 Workers' Compensation Leave in Accordance with FMLA**

If you suffer a compensable on-the-job injury and begin losing time, you may be placed on FMLA to run concurrently with your inability to perform your job functions as certified by a workers' compensation HCP. Some County departments may offer modified or light duty.

## **4.22.20 Return to Work (Regular Position)**

All employees returning to work should notify their supervisor and HR contact at least a week in advance of their anticipated return. Planning and assuring that all requisite paper work is in place are required for your smooth reentry. If you are on FMLA due to your own serious health condition, you may return to work only if the County receives a complete and sufficient written assessment from your HCP certifying that you are fit to perform the essential duties of your position.

The written assessment must be submitted before you are allowed to return to work.

If the leave is continuous, the County may delay reinstatement to your job assignment.

If the leave is intermittent or reduced schedule, the County may not delay reinstatement.

If the written assessment certifying you are fit to perform the essential duties of your position is not returned by the end of your FMLA leave and you have not provided information about your efforts to submit the paperwork (and if you do not provide a new medical certification,) leave can be denied and your employment may be terminated for not providing certification that you are fit for duty or, if applicable, participating in the ADA accommodation interactive process that allows the County to determine best options for your return to work. Also, if the written assessment is timely returned but does not cure the deficiencies, leave may be denied and employment terminated.

Employees who fail to timely return from FMLA will lose their right to reinstatement under the FMLA.



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It is also important to know that when leave is denied, further absences may result in the termination of your employment if the absence is unauthorized, or if you have exhausted other available leave time.

## **4.22.21 Job Reinstatement**

When you return from FMLA, you shall have the right to return to the same or -equivalent position<sup>ll</sup> held prior to the leave:

- The job or position will provide the same pay and benefits
- You are entitled to return to the same or equivalent shift and schedule and you will have the same opportunity for advancement as before the leave
- Benefits accrued at the time of the leave will be available to you upon return from the leave (except paid leave used during FMLA)
- You are entitled to unconditional pay increases that occurred during the time of your leave (any applicable salary schedule increases)

Reinstatement to a County department or office that has implemented employee reorganization changes may be an exception to an -equivalent position<sup>ll</sup>.

## **4.22.22 Other exceptions to job reinstatement granted by FMLA:**

Employees who fail to report back to the County at or before the end of their FMLA will lose the right to reinstatement under the FMLA. The same holds for employees who are on FMLA but fail to provide any required certifications or re-certifications during a leave.

Williamson County will attempt to reinstate timely returning employees; however, the County (as allowed by the Federal FMLA law) does not have to reinstate any exempt, salaried employee who is among the highest paid 10% of County employees. Job restoration will be denied to you if your restoration will cause -substantial and grievous economic injury<sup>ll</sup> to the County. You will be notified, in writing, of the intent to deny restoration to your position. You will be given notice of the non-restoration status prior to the beginning of leave or, if notice is given after the leave has begun, you will be given the option of returning immediately to work.

## **4.22.23 Record Keeping Requirements**

Williamson County will maintain and preserve records pertaining to the FMLA through the Human Resources Department. Human Resources will be notified of all employees who meet the criteria for going on FMLA and will coordinate all certification documents. These records will be maintained in accordance with the FMLA and will be upheld in the strictest confidentiality.

As mandated by the FMLA, all medical records, including doctor certifications and fitness for duty certifications, any correspondence relating to FMLA designations and all copies of your



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timesheets depicting FMLA usage will be kept separate from personnel records in each County department or office.

## 4.23 Sick Leave Pool

The purpose of the Williamson County Sick Leave Pool (SLP) is to provide additional sick leave time to certain employees in the event of an FMLA event which prevents you from active employment. This policy is established pursuant to [Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 157](#), Subchapter E, Sections 157.071 through 157.075. Time may be granted from SLP only after an eligible employee has exhausted all accrued sick, essential pay, vacation, banked holiday or other applicable compensatory time.

### 4.23.01 Definitions

**Administrator:** The person designated by Williamson County Commissioners' Court to serve as the supervisor of the SLP program. The SLP Administrator is responsible for developing means to transfer accrued sick leave into, and out of, the SLP. They develop rules and procedures for the operation of the SLP, and create forms for contributing time, or using leave from the pool.

**FMLA:** Refers to the Family and Medical Leave Act. Typically, FMLA is unpaid leave for up to 12 weeks (480 hours) as designated by Federal Law. In order to be eligible for leave under the FMLA, you must have worked at least 12 months (not necessarily consecutively) for the County and at least 1250 hours as of the date of the qualifying event. (Vacation and Sick Leave do not count as hours worked.)

**Open Enrollment Period:** The Open Enrollment Period for the SLP is during the month of September each year. The SLP administrator establishes the dates. The new year for SLP begins on October 1 of each year. The Williamson County Commissioners' Court reserves the right to change the Open Enrollment Period at any time or allow an additional special enrollment period during any fiscal year of the SLP program.

**SLP Committee:** The SLP Committee is a volunteer group made up of at least five voting members (County employees, Department Directors, and/or Elected Officials) and one non-voting member (Administrator or designee) who are all appointed by the Commissioners' Court. The SLP Committee is responsible for reviewing appeals submitted in response to SLP denials. Three committee members constitute a quorum and will take action to either uphold or overturn the denial. The decisions of the SLP Committee are based on a simple majority vote. In the event of a tie, the SLP Administrator or designee votes as a tie-breaker. Each member of the SLP Committee serves for a one-year term. In the event that a member of the SLP Committee resigns before the end of their term, the Commissioners' Court must immediately fill the vacancy. The SLP Committee members elect a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, and a Secretary at each initial yearly meeting.



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## 4.23.02 Pool Membership

- Each regular full-time employee is eligible to join the SLP program, as long as:
  - You will have a sick leave balance of at least eighty (80) hours following your contribution to the SLP
- If you want to join SLP, you must contribute at least eight hours but not more than 40 hours of accrued sick leave into the pool. SLP contributions are made only in minimum increments of eight (8) hours each
- You can join the SLP annually during the Open Enrollment Period
- In order to join the SLP, you must enroll annually during each Open Enrollment Period. Your membership in the SLP will be for a period of 12 months beginning on November 1<sup>st</sup>
- In order to maintain enrollment in the SLP from year to year, you must renew your membership by contributing at least eight hours (and not more than 40 hours of accrued sick leave) into the pool each year during the Open Enrollment Period. Only one donation each fiscal year is required to maintain membership in the SLP. Failure to enroll during an Open Enrollment Period will result in the termination of your membership in the SLP
- Each hour that you donate to the SLP will be permanently subtracted from your accrued sick leave balance that is on file as of closeout of the Open Enrollment Period. No advances on sick leave accruals can be granted to allow you to meet the minimum required contribution
- Your contribution of accrued sick leave hours is irrevocable. By making such a contribution, you agree to release any rights to the contributed sick leave hours
- The accrued sick leave hours that you contribute become the property of the SLP and cannot be returned in the event that you die, retire, resign, are terminated, placed on temporary suspension, or otherwise fail to maintain your membership in the SLP from year-to-year
- The time contributed to the SLP cannot be designated to a particular employee
- There is no guarantee that you will receive or be eligible to be reimbursed for any time that you contribute if you need / apply for SLP time at a later date



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- After 12 months following the Open Enrollment Period, any unused time that remains in the SLP is carried forward for the next 12 month period
- If you are terminated, resign, or retire, you may donate no more than 80 hours of accrued sick leave before your departure from County employment
- If, at any time, the sick leave available through the SLP falls below the number of days equal to two times the number of members of the SLP, each member will be required to contribute eight additional hours of accrued sick leave to maintain membership. This type of contribution would be considered an emergency allocation that is necessary to bring the pool up to the amount of hours needed to maintain continued operation

## **4.23.03 Granting Of Time from SLP**

- The SLP may only grant you sick leave time to be used for:
  - Catastrophic illness or injury that makes you unable to perform your job as defined by federal law through the FMLA serious medical condition definitions
  - Caring for your immediate family member, who has a catastrophic illness or injury as defined by FMLA
  - SLP will only be granted to employees that are on approved FMLA
- Intermittent Leave may be granted as long as the purpose qualifies as a catastrophic illness or injury as defined by FMLA. Such Intermittent Leave grants are normally approved with the intent of providing the member time to come back to work
- SLP time will not be granted to you when you are receiving workers' compensation benefits under the Texas Workers Compensation Act. SLP time will also not be granted in cases where your receipt of SLP time would allow you to have paid time past the ending date of your current entitlement to FMLA leave
- During each year, following an Open Enrollment Period, the maximum amount of SLP time that may be granted to you will not exceed 1/3 of the total amount in the SLP, or 240 hours, whichever is less as of the time of your application
- If you received time from the SLP but return to work and your immediate family member later becomes ill again from the same or different catastrophic illness or injury within the same 12 month period, you may apply for additional SLP time; however, you will not be granted any amount of SLP time that would cumulatively exceed the lesser 1/3 of the total SLP balance amount or 240 hours whichever is less
- You cannot receive time from the SLP if you are placed on temporary suspension, administrative leave, authorized non-medical leave without pay or are otherwise terminated



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- All unused time that was granted to an employee from the SLP shall be returned to the SLP
- Time granted to you from the SLP ends when:
  - You return to work
  - The granted time is exhausted. The effective date of your termination (including termination due to the employee's death), suspension, administrative leave, retirement, or resignation
  - You have used the maximum amount of SLP time allowable under this policy
  - The SLP Committee determines that you are no longer eligible to receive any further or additional time from SLP
  - FMLA is exhausted

## **4.23.04 Procedure**

- You must apply for permission to receive time from the SLP by submitting a SLP request form. Request Forms are available from the Williamson County Human Resources Department
- Upon receipt of your completed SLP Request, the SLP Administrator or designee reviews the request along with the FMLA documentation. The SLP Administrator will determine if the FMLA and SLP requests meet the guidelines established under the FMLA laws related to eligibility for FMLA
- The number of hours granted through SLP will be based on the FMLA documentation provided and cannot exceed 240 hours or 1/3 of the total amount of hours in the SLP whichever is less
- The SLP Committee reserves the right to modify or waive any requirement or condition, with the approval of the Commissioners' Court, to address any special or unusual circumstances that may arise
- Sick leave granted from the SLP may only be used for approved workdays and to pay for holidays. An employee that is on shift work (i.e., other than normal 40 hour work weeks) must provide a copy of his or her shift schedule for the duration of the requested SLP grant. In the event this type of employee is granted time from the SLP, he or she will be charged the corresponding hours of their respective duty shifts (i.e., 12 or 24 hours vs. an 8 hour shift)
- FMLA leave will run concurrently with leave granted from the SLP
- The estate of a deceased employee is not entitled to payment for unused sick leave acquired by the employee from the SLP





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- Allocated time from the SLP is included in computing your length of service with the County

## **4.23.05 Miscellaneous Provisions**

- The County may discontinue and/or terminate the SLP program without cause, legal repercussions, or ramifications with 120 days written notice to all participating employees
- If any provision of this SLP is determined to be invalid or unenforceable, it is the intention of the County that the provision will be reformed to the best extent possible in its sole discretion
- The guidelines, terms, and conditions of this SLP program may be amended at any time upon the recommendation of the SLP Committee. The Commissioners' Court must approve any recommended amendmen



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## Section Five: Compensation Policies Non-Peace Officer Positions

This policy applies to all departments including those under appointed officials

### **Purpose and Policy Statement**

Provide an organized position control structure and uniform classification system to meet the goals and responsibilities of the County and the needs of the County workforce. Under the provisions of this policy, Elected Officials, Appointed Officials, and Sr. Directors are afforded the freedom to manage and organize their departments within the fiscal framework approved by the Commissioner's Court.

### **5.01 Responsibilities of Commissioner's Court**

Under the authority provided by the Texas Local Government Code to set the annual budget for each County department, the Commissioners Court approves the salary budget and the number of full-time and part-time equivalent positions assigned to an individual County department. The Commissioners Court's goal is to ensure that the total compensation program is structured for consistency and equity.

### **5.02 Salary Schedules**

Williamson County has three salary schedules that cover all classified positions. Below are the Salary Schedules and examples of positions classified on each schedule:

#### Schedule A

- Elected Officials (per Texas Local Government Code)
- Appointed Officials (Animal Services Director, Budget Officer, County Auditor, Elections Administrator, Juvenile Services Director, Purchasing Agent, Veterans Service Officer)
- Senior Directors (Emergency Services, Human Resources, Infrastructure, Parks and Recreation and Technology Services)

#### Schedule P

- Schedule L (Law Enforcement)
- Schedule C (Corrections)

#### Schedule B

- All full-time positions not included on schedules A or P

Links to these salary schedules may be found at [Appendix D](#) – Salary Schedules.

### **5.03 Salary and Position Changes**

The chart below indicates the policies related to pay increases and decreases due to position changes, vacancies and/or merit. All changes are contingent on budgeted funds availability. Any funds remaining in a departments unallocated or salary line items will roll over each budget year. Any request outside of these policies will require the approval of Commissioner's Court.



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Type	Description	Pay Increase	Pay Decrease	Approval Process	Additional Documentation
<b>Merit</b>	An increase in pay that is awarded to an employee based on job performance, Court may or may not grant funding annually	Maximum 5% annually* to employees that have been in their current position for 90 days or more	N/A	Submission of PAS & LIT if applicable	Verification of evaluation
<b>Retention</b>	An increase in pay that is awarded to an employee as an incentive to retain them in their current position	Maximum of 10% above current salary *	N/A	Submission of PAS with justification	Written justification
<b>Promotion</b>	When a current employee is hired into a different position with a higher pay grade	Maximum of 25% above the minimum of the pay grade or 10% when current salary exceeds 25% above (cannot exceed maximum of pay grade & no additional pay increases in the first 12 months with the exception of merit)	N/A	Submission of PAS	N/A
<b>Demotion</b>	When a current employee is hired into a position with a lower pay grade or is demoted to a lower pay grade	N/A	Maximum decrease to the minimum of the pay grade	Submission of PAS with justification	Written justification
<b>Minor Re-organization/ Reclassification</b>	A change in one or more positions which impacts the organization chart of the department or elected office. A newly created position cannot be considered for reclassification or for minor re-organization for 12 months after created	Minimum of the pay grade or 10% whichever is greater* when there is an increase in pay grade. The increase may be less than 10% as determined appropriate by the Department Head or Elected Official but must be minimum of pay grade	Maximum decrease to the minimum of the pay grade	Submission of Minor Re-org request with back-up documentation	Current job description(s), current ORG chart, proposed job description, proposed ORG chart
<b>Vacancy</b>	When a current employee resigns or is terminated a vacancy is created	Maximum of 25% above the minimum of the pay grade for new employees, see promotion above for current employees (no additional pay increases in the first 12 months with the exception of merit)	N/A	Submission of PAS	N/A

**\*15% maximum annual(fiscal year) increase per employee (includes retention, merit, minor re-organization and reclassification, with the exception of increases that are above 15% in order to bring the employee to the minimum of the pay grade)**



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual

## 5.04 Merit Policy

Merit is awarded based on job performance, and job performance itself is evaluated by the applicable department head or elected official. Therefore, an employee must receive a performance evaluation in order to be eligible for a merit increase. When merit is granted by the Court for the budget year, the following policies apply:

- An employee is eligible for merit after 90 days in their current position
- Positions classified as Peace Officers are not eligible for merit increases
- The maximum merit that can be awarded to an employee during the budget year is 5%
- If an employee has reached the maximum of their pay grade, a lump sum merit payment may be awarded and cannot exceed 5% of their current base salary. The performance review period cannot begin until after this policy has been approved and the review period must be a minimum of 90 days before the merit can be awarded
- Merit for small departments with 4 or less employees that do not roll up to a department with an 8000 account, will be granted merit at 1% higher than the amount approved by the Commissioner's Court (i.e. if the Court approves merit at 3%, the small departments will receive 4%). Merit awarded to employees within the small department cannot exceed 5%

## 5.05 Longevity Pay Based on Service Time

Longevity pay is based on an individual employee's length of service with Williamson County. This does not apply to service time with Adult Probation/Community Supervision and Corrections Department/Central Texas Treatment Center and Williamson County and Cities Health District. Employees classified as Peace Officer's will receive longevity based on the policies and procedures in section 6 of this policy manual.

Longevity pay is paid in addition to the individual employee's regular salary and is added to their pay.

- Full-time employees will receive the following total amount per pay period:
  - \$24.00 per pay period after five years of employment
  - \$48.00 per pay period after ten years of employment
  - \$72.00 per pay period after fifteen years of employment
  - \$96.00 per pay period after twenty years of employment
  - \$120.00 per pay period after twenty-five years of employment
- Part-time employees who are classified as PT regularly working more than 20 hours per week will receive the following total amount per pay period:
  - \$12.00 per pay period after five years of employment
  - \$24.00 per pay period after ten years of employment
  - \$36.00 per pay period after fifteen years of employment
  - \$48.00 per pay period after twenty years of employment
  - \$60.00 per pay period after twenty-five years of employment
- Longevity pay begins with the pay period following the completion of five years of employment and increases each five years to a maximum of 25 years
- Part-time employees that are scheduled to work less than 20 hours per week and temporary employees are not eligible for longevity pay





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- An employee may accrue annual longevity pay and receive a lump sum payment each December

**Please note that the Peace Officer's compensation policies are now located in Policy Manual Section 6**

## **5.06 Court Reporters Compensation**

### **Employment Status**

Court Reporters are non-exempt employees of the County that perform primary duties for the Court and also may have secondary independent contractor jobs preparing transcripts. In this second statutory role, who ordered the transcript and when the transcript is prepared dictates whether the Court Reporter is paid wages for time worked, or paid by the page for producing the transcripts.

### **Work Hours**

When Court Reporters are working for the Court, recording and reading back court proceedings, attending court hearings, or preparing transcripts for the Court at work or on special assignment by the Court, these are hours worked that must be recorded. An example of "on assignment by the Court" includes instances where the Court Reporter is required to perform duties at the direction of the Court in another location, or when the Court instructs the Court Reporter to work away from the Court House to complete a transcript for the Court.

Court Reporters are required to accurately record actual time worked for the Court, including time when they are required to be at the Court or at any other designated place to perform work. Any hours worked beyond forty hours in the work week shall be compensated with compensatory leave, pursuant to the County's policy. Vacation leave, sick leave, compensatory leave or holiday leave must be used for any scheduled work time missed during the pay period.

### **Transcripts Prepared for any Williamson County**

Transcripts (1) prepared for the Court, any judge, another court, County Attorney, District Attorney, Attorney General, State, State Agency, Public Defender, or any other public entity or person, or (2) paid for by the County for a public entity or private attorney, are subject to the following rules:

#### **Transcripts Prepared During Working Hours**

Transcripts prepared for the public entities and persons listed above as a part of the Court Reporter's daily or assigned duties during work hours shall be paid their salary wages for all hours worked, but no additional pay per page of transcripts prepared at work.

#### **Transcripts Prepared Outside of Hours Worked**

Transcripts prepared for the public entities and persons listed above, by the Court Reporter on his or her own time and outside of any other work for the Court (i.e. attending, recording and reading back court proceedings), shall be paid the maximum established per page rate for transcripts established by the Court, or State, as may be applicable, for such transcripts prepared by the Court Reporter. Time spent preparing transcripts for these parties outside of





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work, on the Court Reporter's own time, is not considered time worked and no salary wages or overtime will be paid in relation to this time.

## **Private Paid Transcripts**

Private paid transcripts are ordered by third parties such as attorneys, media, etc. Preparation of transcripts, including any portion thereof, for private paid clients cannot be conducted during the normal work hours or utilizing County equipment, office space or supplies. This is an independent contractor relationship between the Court Reporter and the third party client, and the production of the transcript must be performed outside of hours the Court Reporter performs work for the Court. The fees and collection of payment for these transcripts shall be freely negotiated between the Court Reporter and the third party client, and are not set by the judge who presided over the proceedings.



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## Section Six: Compensation Policies Peace Officer Positions

### **6.00 Peace Officer Tenure System and Certification Pay Plan – Salary Schedule P**

- Purpose - The purpose of this pay plan is to establish the procedures and compensation rates for employees designated by the Commissioners Court as eligible for the Peace Officer Tenure System (POTS). The POTS may be eliminated at any time, and the compensation rate may be reduced, frozen, or adjusted at any time, by action of the Commissioners Court
- Eligibility - The Commissioners Court shall designate the peace officer and corrections officer position types that are eligible to participate in POTS. Only employees who are peace officers or corrections officers actively involved in a law enforcement activity and whose job qualifications require state peace officer or state corrections officer certification may be eligible to participate in POTS
- Schedule P is approved by the Commissioners Court each fiscal year. The scale correlates years of service with official rank within an office or department
- Years of Service
  - Years of Service under POTS are based on continuous service (with no break of more than one calendar year) as a regular employee in an approved POTS position ([see POPS chart](#)) in the [Sheriff's office](#), the offices of the [County Attorney](#) or [District Attorney](#), or in any constable's office. Years of service as a corrections officer do not automatically count toward years of service as a law enforcement officer, nor do years of service as a law enforcement officer automatically count toward years of service as a corrections officer. (See Corrections / Law Enforcement Service Time below.) If an employee in an approved POTS law enforcement position transfers from one designated POTS office to another (e.g., constable to sheriff, sheriff to constable, constable to another constable, sheriff to County Attorney, District Attorney, constable), or returns to County employment after a break in service, the employee's years of POTS service will apply, not to exceed the current salary budget for the office, as verified by the County Judge



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- All personnel newly hired from outside Williamson County for positions subject to POTS start at the first pay increment for the POPS position for which they are hired, unless they qualify for a prior service credit that applies to the L1 rank (patrol deputy, or similar) only. (See “Credit for Prior Service” below.)
- Corrections / Law Enforcement Service Time - Current Williamson County corrections officers who successfully complete the selection process to become an officer in the law enforcement division of the Sheriff's Office must begin their law enforcement service at the first pay increment of the law enforcement position and remain at that increment for a period of one calendar year. At the end of that year, such officers will be evaluated, and if they are able to remain in the law enforcement division, they will be placed at the pay increment corresponding to their time of continuous POTS service (with no break of more than one calendar year) in both corrections and law enforcement
  - Effective October 7, 2005, all current officers in POTS law enforcement positions will be placed in the pay increment that corresponds to their time of continuous POTS service (with no break of more than one calendar year) in both corrections and law enforcement
  - Law enforcement officers within the Sheriff's Office who transfer from the law enforcement division to the corrections division will, if appropriate corrections certification is achieved, be placed at the pay increment corresponding to their time of continuous POTS service (with no break of more than one calendar year) in both corrections and law enforcement
- Credit for Prior Service - An applicant for a law enforcement POTS position, or a current officer in such a position at the grade of L1.1, may qualify for service credit earned prior to current employment with Williamson County, if the following requirements are met:
  - Applicant must meet all Williamson County requirements of the hiring office
  - Must be a TCLEOSE certified officer
  - If from another state, the officer must become TCLEOSE certified or attend a regional police academy
  - Must have four years of prior law enforcement experience (prior service subject to approval by hiring office). A 1 year or more gap in service may disqualify a candidate, at the discretion of the hiring office
  - Qualified applicants and current officers will receive up to three years of service credit as it applies to tenure increment increases. The applicants and officers affected by this section are the following:
    - applicants whose prior service may qualify them for starting pay at increment L1.2, L1.3, or L1.4;
    - current officers whose credit for prior service may qualify them for tenure increments L1.2, L1.3, or L1.4; and



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- officers with the rank of law enforcement captain whose beginning pay may be up to increment L5.10 if they have prior service credit of 9 years; the minimum pay for the rank of law enforcement captain is increment L5.6
  - officers with the rank of law enforcement lieutenant, or equivalent, whose beginning pay may be increment L4.6 if they have prior service credit of 5 years, and may be as high as L4.8 if they prior service credit of at least 7 years;
  - officers with the rank of law enforcement sergeant, or equivalent, who's beginning pay may be increment L3.4 if they have prior service credit of 3 years, and may be as high as L3.6 if they have prior service credit of at least 5 years. The hire date and length of service with the County for officers who receive prior service credit will not change as a result of receiving the prior service credit
- Prior service defined (candidates must substantially meet at least 3 of 5 criteria):
  - patrolling in a radio equipped car, answering calls for the protection of life, property and the enforcement of city, county or state laws;
  - conducting preliminary and follow up investigations of disturbances, prowlers, burglaries and other crimes;
  - responding to calls related to traffic incidents and other required emergencies, observing, monitoring and controlling routine and unusual traffic conditions, assisting and advising motorists and enforcing safety laws;
  - collecting and preserving evidence at a crime or accident scene, making arrests as necessary, interviewing victims and witnesses, interrogating suspects, searching and transporting prisoners and testifying in court;
  - filing complaints and performing other work related to processing misdemeanor and felony complaints, enforcing court orders, and preparing reports of arrests and activities performed

Offices must submit a Prior Service Verification Form to the Human Resources Department along with their Oracle Manager Self Service Hire process or Worker Status Change process in order for prior service credit to be applied. Funding is made available for hiring officers in at a higher rate than the previous officer by hiring in other officers at a lower rate, demoting an underperforming employee, or changing an assignment for a current employee that result in a lower salary. The department may not exceed their budgeted salary line item at any point in the fiscal year.

Tenure Progression - Employees in POTS positions move from one tenure level to the next, within the same rank, based on the service anniversary date, subject to funding by the Commissioners' Court.



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- Effective October 1, 2014, the service anniversary date for POTS will be October 1<sup>st</sup> of each year and any pay changes as a result of having six (6) months or more of service on the service anniversary date will take effect on the first day of the first full pay period of each fiscal year
- POTS employees with less than six (6) months of service on October 1<sup>st</sup> each year are eligible to receive an increase to the next step on their assigned pay grade upon completion of six (6) months of service. This increase to the employee's step and pay will take effect on the first day of the first full pay period after completion of six (6) months of service

Promotions and Demotions - Promotions for POTS employees in positions subject to POTS to higher ranks are based on years of service determined in compliance with paragraph (d) (1) and on the office's assessment of an employee's performance, after the County Judge verifies that the office has sufficient funds in the current budget or the Commissioners Court approves additional funding, if necessary. POTS employees who are demoted may carry to a lower POTS grade the POTS step corresponding to their years of service, after the County Judge verifies that the office has sufficient funds in the current budget or the Commissioners Court approves additional funding, if necessary.

- Longevity Pay
  - Each commissioned peace officer in the Sheriff's Office shall be provided statutory longevity pay of not less than \$5 a month for each year of service in the office in addition to the applicable salary rate. This pay must be added into the regular rate of pay when calculating overtime
  - Commissioned peace officers in the Sheriff's Office are eligible to accrue statutory longevity pay at the rate of \$5 per month for each year of service (up to a maximum of 25 years) after the first year anniversary of their certification as a peace officer. This pay must be added into the regular rate of pay when calculating overtime
  - Commissioned peace officers in the Sheriff's Office are not eligible to receive statutory longevity pay under this section and Williamson County longevity pay. Commissioned peace officers in the Sheriff's Office as of October 1, 2003, will receive the greater of statutory longevity pay or Williamson County longevity pay until the amount of statutory longevity pay exceeds County longevity pay as such pay was set on October 1, 2003. From that time forward, such officers will receive only statutory longevity pay. Commissioned peace officers in the Sheriff's Office employed after October 1, 2003 will receive only statutory longevity pay. This pay must be added into the regular rate of pay when calculating overtime
- Timing of Payroll Actions - All pay changes related to dates of service will take effect at the beginning of the first full pay period that follows the attainment of the service date





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- Certification Pay - The following certification pay will be paid to non-elected commissioned peace officers and eligible corrections officer (County Jail) who hold a full-time active duty position in a law enforcement or corrections capacity with the County on June 1st of each year:
  - Law enforcement officers--\$60 per month for Advanced Certification; \$90 per month for Masters Certification. This pay must be added into the regular rate of pay when calculating overtime
  - Corrections officers--\$60 per month for Advanced Certification; \$90 per month for Masters Certification. This pay must be added into the regular rate of pay when calculating overtime
  - Payment for an entire fiscal year beginning on October 1st will be based on the level of certification held as of September 15th of the preceding fiscal year. This pay must be added into the regular rate of pay when calculating overtime

The County Sheriff designates eligible corrections officers via a Payroll Action Sheet (PAS). Certification pay does not transfer with an individual employee who leaves a corrections officer position to accept a law enforcement position nor does it transfer with an individual employee who leaves a law enforcement position to accept a corrections officer position except when the corrections officer position is that of a Bailiff.

## **6.01 Outside Employment for Off-Duty Peace Officers – Amended XX XX, 2014**

The intentional or knowing use of county-owned or controlled assets to assist in the production of private income for a county officer or employee (or knowingly allowing such use by a subordinate) is generally prohibited by state law and could result in criminal prosecution, adverse employment action, or removal from office. As a limited traditional exception recognized by law and as an approved employee benefit for county peace officers, equipment (including without limitation uniform items, radios, and vehicles) owned by Williamson County may be used in connection with special duty work in fire protection, law enforcement, or related activities for a separate and independent employer (public or private) during a county employee's off-duty hours in accordance with the following policy. Elected officials may regulate, at their own discretion, other forms of outside employment that do not involve work for the county or the use of county equipment (for example, by an officer wearing a privately-owned uniform and driving a vehicle owned by the outside employer). Use of county property except in accordance with this policy is prohibited.

## **6.02 Additional Patrol Services for Williamson County Law Enforcement Employees:**

Elected officials are free to control the use by on-duty employees of county equipment assigned to their department, but on-duty employees must be paid from the departmental budget. Work in the following categories performed by a non-exempt employee is considered on-duty time that must be compensated at the employee's regular or overtime rate, as applicable.

- Work performed for the county itself or for its benefit (unless the duties are performed for another county department and have no connection with the employee's regular duties);<sup>64</sup>



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- Work performed at the direction of the employee's department or supervisors (including policing services provided by the department for a community event); or
- Work performed pursuant to an interlocal or intergovernmental agreement

between Williamson County and an agency or political subdivision of the State of Texas in which the county agrees to provide additional law enforcement services for the other party, using on-duty officers, on payment of due compensation by that party. Payment to the county shall be \$65.03 per hour (including both an officer and a vehicle), unless provided otherwise in the individual agreement approved by Commissioners' Court. Non-Exempt employees who provide additional on-duty services pursuant to such an agreement during a given period will be paid straight time (Extra Duty Straight) for the first 5 hours worked under such agreement and overtime (Extra Duty OT) for time worked beyond 5 hours per pay period for such agreement. In other words this time will be counted as productive time (Leave Taken in the pay period will not be reduced) for purposes of such agreement. (If the employee has already reached 85 hours productive, the Extra Duty will be paid at OT.) Exempt employees who provide additional on-duty services pursuant to such an agreement during a given pay period, and who have performed their regular duties during that pay period to the satisfaction of their department head, shall be entitled to additional compensation from the County at the rate of \$41.00 per hour for the first 5 hours worked and \$61.00 per hour for time beyond 5 hours per pay period while providing those additional patrol services and payment of a stipend for coordinating services involved with these additional patrol services. The Stipend will be set per contract and approved by Commissioner's Court.

## **6.03 Additional Patrol Services Provided Through Off-Duty Employment:**

The policy described in the following paragraphs applies only to off-duty law enforcement or related work performed for a separate and independent employer at the sole option of the employee. Pursuant to the U.S. Department of Labor Regulations contained in 29 C.F.R. Part 553, Sec. 553.227, peace officers and other public safety employees may be permitted (solely at the employee's option, with the consent of the elected department head) to engage in special duty work for a separate and independent employer (public or private) during their off-duty hours. Since this is separate employment, the rate of compensation for such work may differ from the employee's regular pay and the hours of work for the second employer are not combined with the hours worked for the primary public agency employer for purposes of overtime compensation.

- Pursuant to the stated position of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service in auditing other agencies, any outside employer who wishes to hire an off-duty officer for special duty work permitted by this policy must allow a county agency to facilitate the employment and process payroll, including federal withholding. The outside employer must agree to make payment of the fee for such services directly to the county, which will establish procedures for the officers to receive their pay for this special detail through the agency's payroll system. The county will retain a fee for administrative expense.
- Contractual Requirements:



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Prior to the commencement of outside employment under this policy, the following documents must be executed:

- A written agreement between the authorized agent of the department and the separate and independent outside employer defining the nature of the special duty work to be performed, giving the consent of the department to the performance of the work, and providing that the outside employer will pay a fee directly to Williamson County in accordance with the payment schedule in Section C below for each employee/hour of services. The agreement should also provide for a contractor to be responsible for managing the special duty work.
  - A written acknowledgement by the officer that he or she is undertaking the special duty work at the employee's sole option and not as an assignment from the department, and that payment to the employee in the amount set out in paragraph C.1. below through the county payroll system will be contingent on payment by the outside employer; and
  - Written acknowledgement from both the employee and the outside employer that the county is providing only administrative services and is not a party to the agreement for special duty services between the officer and the independent employer. Thus, all issues relating to the scope, manner, or means of performance shall be strictly between the parties to the separate employment
- Fee Schedule:
    - The rate paid to the deputy by the independent outside employer shall be as negotiated between the parties. The outside employer shall also pay an additional 12.65% fringe (to cover employment taxes and the county's required workers compensation payments). Private employers (not political subdivisions) shall furthermore pay an additional \$4.00 per hour to the county to cover its administration expenses
    - If the deputy is on 24-hour call and has a take-home marked or un-marked vehicle in connection with providing direct services to the outside employer (such as patrolling or traffic control, but not including merely commuting to or from the job site), the outside employer shall reimburse Williamson County at the rate of \$6.00 per hour (for political subdivisions) or \$12.00 per hour (for private employers). Internal Revenue Service regulations consider the use of a vehicle for private use to be additional taxable compensation

All officers permitted outside employment under this policy must observe their normal standards of conduct during such employment and are subject to disciplinary action from their department if they fail to do so.

If an officer performing special work duties should observe the commission of a crime that requires response in the employee's official capacity as a Williamson County peace officer and outside the scope of the secondary employment (or if the officer is otherwise called to duty in an official capacity), the officer's performance in that capacity will be treated for payroll purposes as on-duty time and will not be billed to the outside employer.



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## 6.04 Summary of Outside Employment for Off-Duty Peace Officers Policy

### 5.04.03.01 Background:

Prior to enacting this policy, off duty compensation was paid by the contracting entities directly to the officers involved who received a 1099 at the end of each year. Vehicle charges were invoiced separately by the individual departments and paid to Williamson County. However, as a result of recent IRS rulings, it was determined that the IRS considers this type of duty (using County uniforms, equipment, etc.) is really an extension of their employment with the County and these earnings should be included as part of the officers employee salary and annual W-2. Thus, the method of compensating these officers had to be changed.

### 6.05 Policy:

There are two main types of Off-Duty Employment. The first is when the County provides *"Additional Patrol Services by Williamson County Law Enforcement Employees"* also known as "Extra Duty." Under this scenario, the officers are paid their normal pay rates and the entity is invoiced a flat rate per hour. The officer remains an employee of the County for all off-duty hours worked. The second is when an officer provides "Additional Patrol Services Provided through Off-Duty Employment" also known as "Voluntary Duty." Under this type, the County simply provides payroll services and charges the entity for the salary, fringes, work comp, vehicle fees and administration fees. The officer is paid whatever amount the hiring entity has agreed to pay them. Legally, the officer becomes an employee of that entity.

### 6.06 Public vs. Private:

In addition, the contracting entities are classified as "Public" (other taxing authorities) and "Private" (non-taxing entities and private companies). This distinction is primarily used when determining the vehicle usage rates to charge that entity.

### 6.07 Scheduling Fees:

A few of the Municipal Utility Districts have agreed to pay a scheduling fee directly to the officer in charge of scheduling the patrols. These fees are a flat, monthly rate and paid to the employee through a semi-monthly stipend.



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## **7. Personal Conduct**

### **7.01 Sexual Harassment Policy**

- Sexual harassment is prohibited conduct. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is an unlawful employment practice in violation of [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#). Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:
  - Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment,
  - Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or
  - Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment
- Examples of unwelcome conduct may include the following:
  - Touching, advances, or propositions
  - Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
  - Graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's body or attire
  - Sexually degrading words to describe an individual
  - Displaying sexually suggestive objects or pictures, including nude or sexually charged photographs, in the workplace
- Williamson County strongly condemns sexual harassment in any County office or department. Each official, department head, supervisor, and employee has the responsibility to maintain a work environment free of such harassment and to report or complain about it as soon as possible. This responsibility includes addressing sexual harassment from a non-employee on County premises. Officials and employees involved in a sexual harassment situation are required to cooperate in any investigation that occurs.
- Employees who believe they have been sexually harassed should report their complaint immediately. Verbally inform one of these individuals:
  - Your supervisor
  - The next level of management above your supervisor
  - The Senior Director of Human Resources
- The complaint should outline:
  - What took place
  - Who was involved
  - Names of any witnesses
  - Your expectations for resolution

**All complaints will be investigated.**



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- You may go directly to the Senior Director of Human Resources if circumstances within your department (or other factors) prohibit a reasonable attempt at an informal resolution of the problem. It should be understood that Human Resources will reverse coordinate as part of the investigation process and may need to contact relevant persons in the department to adequately investigate and resolve the matter
- All complaints received by any elected official, department head, or supervisor must be immediately reported to the Senior Director of Human Resources, who will inform the Commissioners' Court and coordinate with the appropriate personnel as part of any investigation. Prompt reporting is very important. Williamson County maintains confidentiality to the extent that it is possible, and participants in any investigation will be instructed not to discuss the subject. It is prohibited to retaliate against anyone presenting a complaint
- Penalties for officials, department heads, supervisors, and employees found guilty of sexual harassment or retaliation may include, but are not limited to, consultation with superiors, reprimands, transfers, suspensions, demotions, dismissals, or referrals to appropriate enforcement agencies or officials

## 7.02 Criminal Convictions

If you are arrested, charged and/or convicted of a criminal offense at any time during your employment with Williamson County, you shall immediately notify your supervisor and elected official/department head.

For the purposes of this section of the Policy Manual, -convictedll is a finding of guilt by either a judge or a jury without regard to what happens after a case is settled or the suspension of sentence, probation, etc. It includes a suspension of finding of guilt by a judge in deferred adjudication probation, and any plea of nolo contendere.

## 7.03 Discipline

Discipline may include both corrective action and more conclusive measures, including termination. Employees may be subject to discipline for misconduct in situations, including but not limited to:

- Incompetence in the performance of duties
- Inefficiency
- Insubordination
- Dishonesty
- Intemperance
- Immorality
- Violation of rules contained in the Policy Manual, regulations of the Commissioners' Court, laws, or of the office/department
- The conviction of a criminal offense involving moral lack of character as defined by state law or judicial decisions made under state law
- Damage to property or waste of public supplies through negligence or willful misconduct



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- Conduct unbecoming of an officer or employee of the County
- Failure to report to work for one working day without notifying your supervisor
- Misuse of sick leave privileges
- Serious or consistent negligence in the performance of duties
- Serious or consistent failure to meet the written standards of job performance
- Lying or concealing a material fact concerning a matter under investigation: for the purpose of obtaining personal benefit or relating to servicing the public
- Violent or disruptive behavior
- Unauthorized use of public property
- Negligence of duty
- Violation of a safety procedure
- Making a false statement or misrepresenting a material fact in the employee application materials or on other work records
- Other detrimental actions affecting operations or the public
- Seriously or consistently endangering the health or safety of employees or the public
- Possessing or using controlled substances without a prescription as defined by Texas law
- Possessing or using marijuana or drug paraphernalia on County property or any place designated as a work site where the County is conducting business or providing service
- Coming to work, being at work, or remaining at work under the influence of alcoholic beverages or controlled substances as defined by Texas law. This includes marijuana
- Failure to report suspected criminal activity or other violations of County policies
- Failure to work scheduled overtime or overtime worked without prior authorization from your supervisor
- Any misconduct, as determined by the employee's actions

The following disciplinary procedure is available for use by supervisory personnel:

***If informal counseling has not produced results,*** the supervisor may give the employee an oral warning which:

- ***Explains the misconduct***
- ***Outlines a solution***
- ***States the consequences if improvement does not occur***

*Supervisors should document this interaction with a memo that can be retained in the employee's file.*

***If misconduct continues after an oral warning,*** the supervisor may issue a written reprimand to the employee and again, go over:

- ***The nature of the misconduct***
- ***The solution***
- ***The consequences if improvement does not occur***



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*In addition, the employee may be placed on probation for a specified period. Both the employee and supervisor should sign the reprimand and each should retain a copy.*

***If a written reprimand does not produce the desired improvement***, additional written reprimands may be issued or other actions such as paid or unpaid suspension or dismissal may be necessary. If an employee is suspended, the terms of the suspension should be set in writing and signed by both the employee and supervisor.

The disciplinary actions are suggestions. They do not have to be followed in order, or used at all prior to dismissal or other action taken against misbehavior. Disciplinary actions do not affect the -at-will status of employment for any Williamson County employee.

*Unless prior authority has been granted, dismissal shall occur only with the approval of the elected official, department head, or other hiring authority. You may use available grievance procedures if you disagree with the implementation of a disciplinary action.*

## **7.04 First Amended Williamson County Tobacco-Free Workplace Policy for All Williamson County Employees**

Williamson County adopts the following FIRST AMENDED TOBACCO-FREE WORK PLACE POLICY in conjunction with its Wellness Program.

### **6.04.01 Purpose**

Williamson County acknowledges that there are studies by the Surgeon General of the United States, the National Academy of Sciences, and other health organizations which link passive exposure to tobacco smoke, referred to as secondhand smoke, to a variety of negative health conditions. Williamson County also recognizes that tobacco use is one of the most preventable causes of life-threatening diseases; therefore it is Williamson County's responsibility to establish a tobacco-free work environment for our employees. Williamson County further acknowledges that there are studies by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration finding detectable levels of known carcinogens and toxic chemicals, including tobacco-specific nitrosamines and diethylene glycol, a toxic chemical used in antifreeze, in samples of electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), commonly referred to as electronic cigarettes. Williamson County recognizes that e-cigarettes produce a vapor of undetermined and potentially harmful substances, which may appear similar to the smoke emitted by traditional tobacco products. Their use in workplaces and public places where smoking of traditional tobacco products is prohibited creates concern and confusion and leads to difficulties in enforcing the smoking prohibitions.

The objective of this policy is to develop a tobacco-free work place for all employees to perform their job duties and to protect the health and welfare of those employees.



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## 7.05 Policy

- Williamson County adopts this policy prohibiting smoking or use of any Tobacco Product on Williamson County Premises, as defined below.
- Employees who violate this policy, including employees of elected officials are subject to appropriate disciplinary action. The disciplinary actions for employees of the Williamson County Commissioners Court shall be as follows:
  - A written formal warning for the first and second violations;
  - On the third violation, the employee can either be suspended for (5) five work days with no pay or can be terminated
- This policy applies to all Williamson County employees, regardless of position and includes all temporary and part-time employees
- This policy shall become effective as of February 11, 2014. Employees who are employed as of the effective date will be notified of changes in this policy. Employees will also be informed of Williamson County's Tobacco Cessation Programs, when available. All future applicants for employment by Williamson County will also be notified of the Tobacco Use Policy and the possible availability of smoking cessation classes

## 7.06 Definitions

Williamson County Premises: Except for premises that are otherwise specifically excluded herein below, Williamson County Premises shall mean and include all Williamson County Offices; all buildings leased or owned by Williamson County; the attached protective coverings, the entrances, exits or other parts of such buildings; interior spaces of Williamson County owned, leased, or rented vehicles; and all exterior properties owned or leased by Williamson County, including the grounds, parking lots and garages that are situated on Williamson County property.

Williamson County Offices: Any enclosed area which employees normally frequent during the course of employment, including but not limited to work areas, employee lounges, employee restrooms, conference rooms, and private offices.

Tobacco Use: Tobacco Use shall mean and include the lighting, holding, carrying of, inhaling and exhaling of the smoke, vapor, or other byproduct of a Tobacco Product, which includes but is not limited to the carrying or holding of a lighted or otherwise activated pipe, cigar, cigarette, electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), electronic cigarettes, or any other lighted smoking equipment or device. Tobacco Use shall also mean the oral use of any type of Tobacco Product.

Tobacco Product: The product made or derived from tobacco that is intended for human consumption, including any component, part, or accessory of a Tobacco Product. Tobacco Product includes but is not limited to cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, and chewing tobacco.



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## **7.07 Reservation of Rights**

Williamson County reserves the right to interpret, suspend, cancel or dispute, with or without notice, all or any part of this policy or procedures discussed herein. Employees will be notified before implementation of any change.

Nothing in this policy alters an employee's at-will employment status and shall not constitute or be deemed a contract or promise of employment at any time for any or no reason, without notice, and Williamson County retains the right to terminate any employee at any time, for any reason, with or without notice.

## **7.08 Other Laws and Regulations**

The provisions of this policy shall apply in addition to, and shall be subordinate to any requirements imposed by applicable federal, state or local laws, regulations or judicial decisions.

Unenforceable provisions of this policy, as imposed by applicable law, shall be deemed to be deleted.

## **7.09 Excluded Premises**

The only excluded premises from this policy shall be county roads within Williamson County, sidewalks that are adjacent to public streets or sidewalks that are not owned by Williamson County, parks that are owned, operated and/or managed by Williamson County, the Central Texas Treatment Center located in Granger, Texas and the Williamson County Jail where inmates are housed. The Sheriff may impose his/her own restrictions within the confines of only the Williamson County Jail. However, this policy will include and apply to all Williamson County Sheriff employees.

## **7.11 Tobacco Use by the Public**

Except for premises that are otherwise specifically excluded herein above, smoking or the use of any Tobacco Product by any member of the public shall also be strictly prohibited on Williamson County Premises. Signs will be posted on all Williamson County Premises that explain the policy. This policy will also be posted on Williamson County's website.



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## 7.12 Drug Free Workplace

The purpose of the Drug Free Workplace policy is to develop and maintain a safe and productive workplace. Use and misuse of drugs and alcohol will impair your ability to perform your job duties and may endanger yourself, your coworkers, or the public, as well as property.

See [Appendix E](#) – Drug Free Workplace Policy for additional information.

## 7.13 Solicitation

Persons not employed by Williamson County may not solicit or distribute literature in the workplace at any time for any purpose. Williamson County recognizes that employees may have interests in events and organizations outside the workplace; however, you may not solicit or distribute literature concerning these activities during working time. (Working time does not include lunch breaks, work breaks, or any other periods in which employees are not on duty.) In addition, the posting of written solicitations is limited to County bulletin boards. You should check with your department head or elected official for approval. Solicitations using electronic systems, including County email, are prohibited and subject to the Electronic Systems Use Policy ([See Appendix B](#)). If you experience any problems, please contact Human Resources.

## 7.14 Outside Employment

You may be employed in any capacity in a business, trade, occupation, or profession, at any time other than hours that you are scheduled to work for the County, as long as such employment does not violate state laws concerning abuse of office or employment, does not interfere with your normal duties, and does not constitute a breach of ethics or conflict of interest.

## 7.15 Political Activity

You are encouraged to vote and to exercise other responsibilities of citizenship consistent with state and federal law and these policies. You are not required to contribute to any political fund or render any political service to any person or party. You will not be dismissed, suspended, demoted, or otherwise prejudiced for refusing to do so. You may not:

- Use your official authority or influence to interfere with, or affect the result of an election or nomination for office
- Directly or indirectly coerce, attempt to coerce, command, or advise a local or state officer (or employee) to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value to a party, committee, organization, agency, or person for a political purpose



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County employees, except elected officials, may not participate in political activities while on County duty. You are expected to remove County uniforms and identification, including rank and/or title, before participating in a political activity. In addition, no County-owned property, vehicle, building, and/or office may be used for displaying campaign materials or for conducting any partisan political activity. This section does not apply to the use of the Courthouse, Courthouse grounds or County buildings when used for the purpose of political announcements approved by Commissioners' Court.

- *Note: Any employee who is subject to the provisions of the federal Hatch Act may not be a candidate for elective office in a partisan election. County employees are subject to this additional Hatch Act restriction if their principal employment is in connection with an activity which is financed in whole or in part by loans or grants made by the federal government.*

If your political activity is not in violation of policy, it will not be considered in determining your compensation, eligibility for promotion or demotion, work assignment, leave and travel requests, or in applying any other employment practices.

## 7.16 Retaliation Prohibited by State Law

If you [report a violation of the law](#) to an appropriate law enforcement authority, you cannot be suspended, terminated, or otherwise discriminated against by a state or local governmental body. The law known as the -Whistleblower Act<sup>11</sup> prohibits retaliation against public employees who report official wrongdoing. The Act states that -a state or local government entity may not suspend or terminate the employment of, or take other adverse personnel action against, a public employee who in good faith reports a violation of law by the employing governmental entity or another public employee to an appropriate law enforcement authority.<sup>11</sup>(Tex. Gov't Code Ann. §554.002(a) (Vernon 1999).

## 7.17 Social Media

While Williamson County encourages you to enjoy and make good use of your off-duty time, certain activities may become a problem if they affect your work. You may use social media in any way you choose, as long as that use does not produce adverse consequences. For this reason, you are reminded that the following guidelines apply in your use of social media, both on and off duty:

- If you publish any personal information about yourself, another employee of Williamson County, applicants, or an associate of Williamson County in any public medium (print, broadcast, digital, or online) that:



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- Has the potential or effect of involving you, your co-workers, or Williamson County in any kind of dispute or conflict with other employees or third parties
- Interferes with the work of any employee
- Creates a harassing, demeaning, or hostile working environment for any employee
- Disrupts the smooth and orderly flow of work within the office, or the delivery of services to Williamson County's taxpayers or customers
- Harms the reputation of Williamson County among its taxpayers or in the community at large
- States falsities or is slanderous about the County
- Reveals information that should be treated as confidential
- You will be responsible for such problems and will be subject to counseling and/or disciplinary action up to termination of employment. In general, the work place conduct rules as to interactions with co-workers and supervisors apply

### **Examples of Personal Information:**

- *Personal information means identifying information such as social security numbers, driver's license numbers, home addresses and telephone numbers. It can also mean giving away names of family members or information indicating their home addresses and phone numbers. Information that is considered confidential, by law, includes the personal or private conduct, affairs, and personal interactions that are unrelated to your job performance or official duties.*
- Other information recognized as being confidential (by law) and/or information regarding the personal or private conduct and affairs of that person and interaction with other people that is unrelated to the person's job performance or official duties for Williamson County is personal information. Health information is also considered personal information under this policy
- You may not use County equipment or facilities for non-work-related activities or business
- Conducting yourself in such a way that your actions and relationships with others could become the object of gossip in the office, or causing unfavorable publicity for Williamson County in the community, is prohibited. In such a situation, you should request guidance from your supervisor to discuss the possibility of a resolution that would avoid such problems. Depending on the circumstances, failure to seek such guidance may be considered evidence of intent to conceal a violation of the policy and to hinder an investigation into the matter
- Should you decide to create a personal blog, be sure to provide a clear disclaimer that the views expressed in the blog are yours alone, and do not represent the views of Williamson County
- All information published on any blog(s) or other positing(s) should comply with Williamson County confidentiality and disclosure policies. This also applies to comments posted on other social networking sites, blogs and forums
- Be respectful to Williamson County, co-workers, taxpayers, and associates. Be mindful of your physical safety when posting information about yourself or others on any forum. Social media sites are not an appropriate forum for venting personal complaints about supervisors or co-



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workers. Describing intimate details of your personal and social life, or providing information about your detailed activities might be interpreted as an invitation for further communication or even stalking and harassment that could prove dangerous to your physical safety

- Personal social media activities should never interfere with work commitments and **should not be conducted while at work**
- Your online presence can reflect on Williamson County. The lines between public and private, personal and professional information are blurred in this context. Be aware that your comments, posts, or actions captured via digital or film images can affect the image of Williamson County. If you are posting to personal networking sites and are speaking about job-related content or about the County, identify yourself as a County employee and use a disclaimer to make it clear that your views are not reflective of the views of County
  - **Example:** *"The opinions expressed on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent the views of Williamson County."*
- Be aware that if you access and post on personal social media sites using County equipment, that any such information could be subject to the Texas Open Records Act and information, sites accessed, or usage may be disclosed to the public as the result of a proper request
- Any violations of this policy are subject to disciplinary action

## 7.18 Gifts or Gratuities

The Texas Penal Code includes specific details regarding gifts, gratuities and bribery for public servants.

See [Appendix A](#) - Public Servants, Bribery, Honoraria, Gifts for additional information.

## 7.19 Electronic Systems Use

All county electronic systems (ES) are County property provided for the conduct of County business. Examples of ES are personal computers, laptops, telephones, email, voicemail, and Internet access software.

You should be aware that ES communications or records may be subject to examination or review for legal or work-related purposes. They may also be subject to public open records requests.

See [Appendix B](#) – Electronic Systems Use Policy for additional information.



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## 7.20 Workplace Safety and Security

Williamson County promotes a safe and secure work environment free from violence, harassment, intimidation and disruptive behavior. When speaking with co-workers or customers, employees are expected to be inclusive and respectful.

Employees should also be aware of potential safety risks and ways to minimize risks for themselves, co-workers and the public. These risks include fire, bomb threat, hostile subject, active shooter, terrorism, hazardous chemicals, building damage/instability and weather-related emergencies.

See [Appendix F](#) – Workplace Safety and Security Policy for additional information and for a listing of Essential Departments / Personnel.

## 7.21 Vehicle Management & Use

The Vehicle Management & Use Policy applies to everyone who operates motor vehicles and equipment while conducting County business or using a County vehicle at any time.

See [Appendix G](#) – Vehicle Management & Use Policy for additional information.

## 7.22 Fleet Management Program

The County's vehicles and equipment are critical components in providing efficient and effective services to the residents of Williamson County. Our goal is to make certain that the vehicles/equipment are the right ones for the job and are acquired at the lowest cost possible. They are maintained as properly and efficiently as possible and ultimately sold for the highest possible resale value.

See [Appendix H](#) – Fleet Management Program Policy for additional information.

## 7.23 Communicating with the Public

Providing timely, courteous, and efficient service to the public is our job as public servants. You are expected to conduct yourself in a way that will earn public respect and bring credit to the County and its operations.

See [Appendix I](#) – Public Communications Policy for additional information.

## 7.24 Employee Related Operational Expenses





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Williamson County adheres to employee related fiscal policies which are administered by the County Auditor's Office. Employee related operational expenses include tuition reimbursement, reimbursement for certification exam expenses, off-site staff development, travel while on County business, seminars/conferences, meals, lodging, car rental, personal car usage, other expenses, uniforms, employee recognition and non-reimbursable expenses.

See [Appendix J](#) – Fiscal Policies Administered by the County Auditor's Office for additional information.

## **7.25 Records Management Requirements for Electronic Mail**

Electronic mail messages created, received, retained, used, or disposed of using Williamson County's electronic mail system are subject to the County's Records Management Requirements.

See [Appendix K](#) – Williamson County Policy for Records Management Requirements for Electronic Mail for additional information.

## **7.26 Security for Public Safety Systems**

Computers with access to CJIS data as well as criminal justice data originating or derived from any other federal, state or local criminal history or public safety databases have to be secured far more than other County equipment due to the extremely sensitive nature of the data. In addition, strict State and Federal requirements necessitate certain protections.

See [Appendix L](#) – Security Policy for Public Safety Systems for additional information.



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## **8. Grievance Procedures for Employees in Non-Elected Office Departments**

It is the policy of Williamson County, insofar as possible, to conduct business in a manner that avoids grievances and to handle them promptly and efficiently if they occur. You have a right to seek action on your grievance and no adverse action will be taken against you because of your good faith grievance. It is expected that you not raise grievances solely for the purposes of delay or harassment or raise repeated, unfounded grievances. If you implement the grievance procedure, Williamson County maintains the right to proceed with any disciplinary action, which is not in retaliation for the grievance. Information concerning an employee grievance is confidential, to the extent allowed to the County.

A grievance (informal or formal) may be filed on one or more of the following grounds:

- Improper application of rules, regulations and procedures (not including the grievance rules, regulations and procedures, themselves)
- Unfair treatment
- Unlawful discrimination based on race, religion, color, sex (including sexual harassment,) age, disability, national origin, or other legally protected status
- Improper application of fringe benefits
- Improper working conditions
- *Note: For procedures to follow in the event of a grievance by an elected official, see Chapter 149, Sec. 152.014 Local Government Code.*

### **8.01 Summary of Grievance Procedure**

For employees in offices of Elected Officials, the grievance process defined by the Elected Official should be followed. Elected Officials are the final appeal level for their respective departments.

This guidance does not alter the employment-at-will relationship in any way. Final decisions on grievances will not be precedent setting or binding on future grievances, unless they are officially stated as County policy. When appropriate, the decisions will be retroactive to the date of the employee's original grievance.

### **8.02 Informal Grievances**

An informal grievance is presented verbally. The first step in the grievance procedure is an attempt to resolve the grievance by informal conference with your supervisor. However, if the official or department head is the wrongdoer in instances of harassment, retaliation, or potential whistleblower activity you should immediately contact HR. If this informal conference does not result in a satisfactory resolution of the problem, you should file a formal, written grievance.



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## 8.03 Formal Grievances

The steps for a formal grievance are as follows:

- 1) Must be in writing, signed by you, and presented to your supervisor within ten business days after the alleged issue occurred. A statement of the specific corrective action that you request must be included in the written grievance.
  - In the event that it would be inappropriate to address the grievance with your supervisor, (such as when the supervisor is the wrongdoer) you should go to the department head or elected official
  - If the department head or elected official is the wrongdoer in instances of harassment, retaliation, or potential whistle blower activity, the employee should go to the Senior Director of Human Resources or one of the HR Directors
- 2) After being presented with a written and signed grievance, the supervisor will:
  - meet with you and other people necessary to gather the facts
  - immediately notify the department head and the Senior Director of Human Resources
  - attempt to resolve the grievance with you and, if requested, with your representative
  - Communicate the decision in writing within ten business days after receipt of the grievance
  - Send a copy of the proposed resolution to the elected official/department head and the Senior Director of Human Resources
- 3) If you do not receive a written resolution from the supervisor within ten business days from the date the grievance was filed, or are not satisfied with the proposed resolution, you must file a written appeal within ten business days with the department head along with a copy to the Senior Director of Human Resources.
- 4) The department head will review the facts and the file, and may investigate the charges personally or through a designee. The person(s) conducting the investigation will meet with the parties involved. The department head will respond in writing to the employee within ten business days of the date the appeal was received in the elected official's/department head's office.
- 5) If the department head is appointed by the Commissioners' Court, Juvenile Probation Board, or District Judges, and you do not receive a written resolution from the department head within ten business days of the date the grievance was appealed, (or if you are not satisfied with the appointed department head's proposed resolution) you must file a written appeal within ten business days with the appropriate appointing authority (i.e., Commissioners' Court, Juvenile Probation Board, or District Judges) through the Senior Director of Human Resources.





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- 6) The appropriate appointing authority will then review the facts and the file and conduct an investigation, if deemed appropriate, before deciding. The appropriate appointing authority's decision is final. Longer intervals to facilitate investigation or fact-finding on behalf of the County may be appropriate depending upon the grievance.



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## **9. Self-Funded Health Plan Benefits**

### **9.01 Health Benefits – For more detailed information, see Employee Benefits Booklet**

All eligible County and Precinct officials, employees (full time status regularly working 30 or more hours per week) and retirees will have the opportunity to enroll in the health benefit plans under the Self-Funded Williamson County Benefits Program. Retirees who opt out of the opportunity to enroll in Medical benefits at time of Retirement will not be eligible to enroll at a later date. Each year, the budget for the Self-Funded Benefits Program is reviewed and approved. This budget includes all claims, administrative, and operating expenses associated with the program.

A Benefits Committee composed of the County Judge, one County Commissioner and five others (selected from department heads and employees) will serve as voting trustees for the Williamson County Benefits Program. If any Committee member misses three (3) consecutive meetings, the Committee may recommend a new Committee member for appointment by the Commissioner's Court. The committee acts in compliance with the [Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 172, Sec. 172.001-172.015, Texas Political Subdivisions Uniform Group Benefits Program](#). Non-voting staff members from the Human Resources Department, County Attorney's office, and County Auditor's office also attend and participate in these meetings. Regular Benefits Committee meetings are scheduled in advance for each fiscal year. These meetings are held in compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act and are open to the public. The meeting dates can be found on the [Human Resources Internet site calendar](#).

Health premium rates will be paid on a pretax basis through payroll deduction. Your health premium rates will be determined each year by the Williamson County Benefits Committee and approved by the Commissioners' Court. Annual estimated minimum increases are the equivalent of current medical trend (inflation) rates. Any balance exceeding the portion that you pay will be funded by the County.

County and Precinct officials, employees, and retirees may also cover their eligible dependents under the same health benefit. The appropriate additional premium for dependent coverage will also be deducted through payroll on a pretax basis (except for retirees).

The eligible retiree will be provided health benefits for a specified premium rate and the County funds the balance. All retiree premiums are paid on an after-tax basis and are set up for payment using an ACH deduction. The retiree may also cover their eligible dependents for an additional specified premium rate. A retiree is defined as someone who retires directly from active duty with Williamson County and is receiving lifetime monthly Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS) pension benefit payments. The County will stop insurance coverage on the retiree when:

- the retiree becomes eligible for Medicare
- the retiree fails to submit the required set premium

The County will stop insurance coverage on the retiree dependent when the retiree dependent becomes eligible for Medicare. Anyone who retired before April 1, 1994, will have health insurance coverage until age 70. All other retirees and eligible dependents will have health insurance coverage until age 65, at which time coverage will cease.



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The County's funding for the health plan will be calculated and paid based on the total budgeted full-time positions (whether vacant or filled) for the fiscal year multiplied by the Court's approved employer health plan contribution rate. Payment from all funds that are budgeted for staff will be processed and paid to the Self-Funded Williamson County Benefits Program. This does not apply to any staff positions fully funded from federal, state, or local grants. The County's health plan funding for staff positions fully funded from federal, state, or local grants will be processed as part of semi-monthly payroll processes. The monthly payment amount would remain constant barring any mid-year staff additions or reductions.

Information regarding the specific benefit plans and programs currently being offered to employees can be found on the Human Resources Internet site.

- *Note: Newly Hired employees are eligible for Williamson County Benefits after a 60-day waiting period. Benefits become effective on the first day of the month following your eligibility date. Payroll deductions for elected benefits begin in the first pay period in which coverage becomes effective.*

## 9.02 Open Enrollment

An open enrollment process is offered to employees, retirees, and their eligible dependents each year, usually in the fall. During open enrollment, employees may elect to change their benefit coverage for themselves and their eligible dependents. Changes may include first time enrollment, termination of coverage, or changing elections for medical, dental and vision coverage, and flexible spending accounts.

All employees are required to select a plan to participate in or to opt out of participating in the County's benefits plan during the open enrollment process. If a selection is not made, the employee will be enrolled in the least expensive employee only health care plan available.

Retirees may also elect to change their benefit coverage for themselves and any covered eligible dependents during Open Enrollment. However, once a retiree drops coverage, they may not elect that coverage again in future open enrollment periods and once a retiree drops coverage for an eligible dependent, the dependent cannot be added for coverage in the future.

Open enrollment changes become effective November 1st.

## 9.03 Changing Your Benefit Elections

The benefit choices you make during the new employee enrollment period or the annual open enrollment period remain in effect for the benefit plan year. You may not change your elections during the year just because you change your mind or don't use your benefits; however, you may change your level of coverage if you have a change in family status.

**Examples of Family Status change:**



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- Marriage, divorce or legal separation
- Adding a child through birth or adoption
- Death of a spouse
- Child dies or is no longer an eligible dependent under the terms of the specific plan
- Spouse starts or ends employment
- Spouse moves from full-time to part-time (or vice versa)
- Spouse takes an unpaid leave of absence
- You take an unpaid leave of absence
- You or your spouse have a significant change in eligibility for your spouse's employer's group health coverage attributable to your spouse's employment
- You meet the requirement under a [Qualified Medical Child Support Order \(QMCSO\)](#)

Based upon IRS Guidelines, you must notify the Human Resources Department of a change in family status within 31 days from the date of the event. Additionally, you may be required to provide proof of status change. Otherwise, you may not be allowed to change your coverage. To be approved, your new benefit election must be consistent with the change in family status.

## 9.04 COBRA Coverage

Upon termination of medical, dental, or vision coverage, you may be eligible for continued coverage under the [Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act \(COBRA\)](#). For additional information, please contact the Human Resources Department.



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## Appendix A

### Public Servants, Bribery, Honoraria, Gifts

#### **Public Servant, Section 1.07(a) (41), Texas Penal Code**

-Public servant means a person elected, selected, appointed, employed, or otherwise designated as one of the following, (even if they have not yet qualified for office or assumed duties):

- (A) An officer, employee, or agent of government
- (B) A juror or grand juror
- (C) An arbitrator, referee, or other person who is authorized by law or private written agreement to hear or determine a cause or controversy
- (D) An attorney at law or notary public when participating in the performance of a government function
- (E) A candidate for nomination or election to public office
- (F) A person who is performing a governmental function under a claim of right, although they are not legally qualified to do so

#### **Benefit Section 1.07(a) (7), Texas Penal Code**

-Benefit means anything reasonably regarded as financial gain or fiscal advantage, including any other person in whose welfare the beneficiary has a direct and substantial interest.

#### **Gifts to Public Servants by Person Subject to his Jurisdiction • Section 36.08, Texas Penal Code**

- a) A public servant in an agency performing regulatory functions or conducting inspections or investigations commits an offense if they solicit, accept, or agree to accept any benefit from someone who is subject to that regulation, inspection, or investigation either by the public servant or by their agency.
- b) A public servant in an agency having custody of prisoners commits an offense if he solicits, accepts, or agrees to accept any benefit from a person in their custody or the custody of their agency
- c) A public servant in an agency carrying on civil or criminal litigation on behalf of the government commits an offense if they solicit, accept, or agree to accept any benefit from someone whom litigation is pending either by the public servant or their agency
- d) A public servant who exercises discretion in connection with contracts, purchases, payments, claims, or other financial transactions of government commits an offense if they solicit, accept, or agree to accept any benefit from a person interested in, or likely to become interested in, any contract, purchase, payment, claim, or transaction involving the exercise of their discretion.
- e) A public servant who has judicial or administrative authority and is employed by (or in) a tribunal having judicial or administrative authority, (or who participates in the enforcement of a tribunal's decision,) commits an offense if they solicit, accept, or agree to accept any benefit from a person interested in, or likely to become interested in, any matter before the servant or tribunal.
- f) A public servant who receives an unsolicited benefit that they are prohibited from accepting under this section may donate the benefit to a governmental entity that has the authority to accept the gift or may donate the benefit to a recognized, tax-exempt, charitable organization formed for educational, religious, or scientific purposes.
- g) An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor.



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## **Section 36.10, Texas Penal Code [Exceptions to 36.08]**

Sections 36.08 (Gift to Public Servant) and 36.09\* (Offering Gifts to Public Servants) do not apply to:

1. Fees that a public servant is lawfully entitled to or for which legitimate consideration has been given outside an official capacity is exempt from the Gift to Public Servant restrictions
2. Personal, professional, or business relationships independent of the official status of a public servant may be exempt from the restrictions within the section on Gifts to Public Servants
3. A benefit to a public servant required to file a statement under Chapter 572, Government Code, or a report under Title 15, Election Code that is derived from a function in honor or appreciation of the recipient if:
  - a) the benefit and the source of any benefit in excess of \$50 are reported in the statement
  - b) the benefit is used solely to settle the expenses that accrue in the performance of duties or activities in connection with the office which are non-reimbursable by the state or political subdivision
4. A political contribution as defined by Title 15, Election Code
5. Not included in this Appendix
6. An item with a value of less than \$50, excluding cash or a negotiable instrument, as described in Section 3.104, Business and Commerce Code
7. An item issued by a governmental entity that allows the use of property or facilities owned, leased, or operated by the governmental entity

Section 36.08 (Gift to Public Servant) does not apply to food, lodging, transportation, or entertainment accepted as a guest and, if the donee is required by law to report those items, they are reported in accordance with that law.

## **Bribery Section 36.02, Texas Penal Code**

- a) A person commits a bribery offense if he intentionally or knowingly offers, confers or agrees to confer, or solicits, accepts, or agrees to accept from another:
  - a) any benefit as consideration for the recipient's decision, opinion, recommendation, vote, or other exercise of discretion as a public servant, party official, or voter
  - b) any benefit as consideration for the recipient's decision, vote, recommendation, or other exercise of official discretion in a judicial or administrative proceeding
  - c) any benefit as consideration for a violation of a duty imposed by law on a public servant or party official
  - d) any benefit that is a political contribution as defined by Title 15, Election Code, or that is an expenditure made and reported in accordance with Chapter 305, Government Code.

If the benefit was offered, conferred, solicited, accepted, or agreed to regarding an agreement to take or withhold a specific exercise of official discretion, it is considered bribery. If a decision was influenced by the benefit in question, changing the outcome of an official discretion, this is bribery. There must be evidence that an agreement has taken place in order to proceed with prosecution of bribery charges.

- a) If you seek to influence, or are influenced by someone who is not qualified to carry out the intended bribe, this will not disqualify you from prosecution
- b) You are not disqualified from prosecution if a benefit has not been offered, conferred, accepted, or solicited until after:



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- the decision, opinion, recommendation, vote, or other exercise of discretion has occurred
  - the public servant ceases to be a public servant
- c) An offense under this section is a felony of the second degree.

## **Acceptance of Honorarium Section 36.07, Texas Penal Code**

- a) A public servant commits an offense if they solicit, accept, or agree to accept an honorarium in consideration for services that the public servant would not have been requested to provide if it were not for their official position or duties.
- b) This section does not prohibit a public servant from accepting transportation and lodging expenses in connection with a conference or similar event in which the public servant renders services.

**Example:** *addressing an audience or engaging in a seminar, to the extent that those services are more than merely perfunctory, or from accepting meals in connection with such an event.*

- c) An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor.



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## **Appendix B Electronic Systems Use Policy (Technology Services Department)**

### **Introduction**

All county electronic systems (ES) are County property provided for the conduct of County business. Examples of ES are personal computers, laptops, telephones, email, voicemail, and Internet access software.

You should be aware that ES communications or records may be subject to examination or review for legal or work-related purposes. They may also be subject to public open records requests.

### **Confidentiality**

Access to County systems and software is limited to authorized personnel with appropriate passwords. The Technology Services Department (TSD) may require a list of passwords for use with some County systems.

You should not share passwords. If a password has been compromised, you must change it and, if necessary, notify TSD.

You must be aware that information sent over local networks or the internet may not be secure and can present confidentiality, privacy, and disclosure issues for personnel and the County.

### **User Responsibilities:**

- You must assume responsibility for the content and dissemination of ES messages. Most County ES communications constitute official records under the Open Records Act and may be available to the public. You must be professional and careful in using ES for sensitive communications.
- Software licensing is a serious legal issue. Improperly licensed software can result in serious repercussions for the County and for you. It is imperative that all software be accounted for, properly licensed, approved by TSD or the Commissioners' Court, and installed by TSD or under the direction of TSD.
  - Personal software may not be installed on County computers; do not download or copy programs or files off the internet, or as mailed from an unknown party.
  - County software, unless specifically authorized by TSD, and only in rare situations, is not to be installed on your personal home computer
  - Software upgrades are only to be installed on computers containing properly-licensed versions of the original software
  - All software media and the associated licenses are to be stored under the direction and control of TSD. Any violation must be immediately reported to TSD
- Abusive, harassing, bigoted, obscene, and profane messages are strictly prohibited. These communications can result in legal repercussions, or ramifications or other penalties for the individual and the County. The County's Harassment and Discrimination Policies apply to ES communications and use. County officials and employees must immediately report any incidents of the sort



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listed in this paragraph. The incidents should be reported to the County Attorney or the Senior Director of Human Resources.

- Officials and employees shall not read, view, or listen to other employees' ES communications without a legitimate business need.
- Officials and employees shall not send ES communications which exceed limits set by TSD. An official or employee may request an exception from the PIO or TSD and, if denied, may appeal to the County Judge. Sending multiple ES communications in order to circumvent the limit is a violation of this policy.
- Based on the business need to communicate with all County employees, certain departments have the authority to send ES communications to all email users. Those departments include Human Resources, Payroll, County Judge/PIO, and TSD. Solicitations for non-County business are prohibited and are subject to the Solicitation policy.
- Any elected official or department head may designate one or more individuals within their own department to have authority to send ES communications to all employees within their own department even if the number of employees in that department exceeds the limit set.
- Protection and Security of Laptops and Other Portable Equipment – An employee must receive authorization from their department head or elected official prior to removing any laptop or other equipment from County property. An employee who removes a laptop or other equipment from County property is responsible for such equipment and must keep it secure at all times. Although it is recommended that employees never leave laptops and other equipment unattended, when it is absolutely necessary said equipment must be securely locked. Employees must take all reasonable precautions to protect and secure any equipment in their possession. Laptops and other equipment should never be left unattended, even for a few minutes. An employee may be responsible for the cost of replacing a laptop or other equipment when unreasonably left unattended. If stolen, department head or elected official may request a copy of the police report.

## Personal Use of Internet

- Internet access is intended for official County business. Abuse of Internet access includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. engaging in any unlawful or malicious activity;
  - b. misrepresenting a personal communication as an official communication;
  - c. sending a chain letter;
  - d. sending, receiving, or accessing pornographic materials;
  - e. using objectionable language;
  - f. advertising personal items.
  - g. using audio- or video-streaming to listen to the radio or watch television or videos over the internet.
  - h. using county computers to make money or personal profit.
- Proper use of Internet access includes the following:





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- a. downloading job-related information;
- b. sending and receiving job-related e-mail messages and file attachments;
- c. making business arrangements;
- d. searching job-related databases;
- e. using the Internet for occasional, brief personal communications, where those do not violate any other provisions of this section or, in the view of officials and department heads, do not interfere with County business.

## **Legal and Disciplinary Action**

- A violation of this policy may result in legal action and/or disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.
- Misuse of County ES may also result in limiting and/or revocation of the user's access to e-mail, Internet, voice mail systems and other ES.





## Summary of Williamson County Leave Type Rules

*The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), in 29 CFR 541.710, allows public employers to make deductions from the pay of exempt employees for partial-day absences such employees can no longer be compensated like other employees from approved leave banks. Therefore, payments to exempt employees who have no longer accrued leave would be a "gift" and in the interest of public accountability, **Williamson County will reduce the pay of an exempt employee for partial day and other absences when an exempt employee has no accrued leave from which to be compensated.***

	Vacation	Sick Leave	Comp Time	Holiday Time	Floating Holiday	Emergency Leave	Civil Leave	Essential Pay	USERRA (Military Leave)	Admin Leave with Pay
<i>This type of leave is only accrued by employees in full-time positions and in part-time &gt;20 positions (not accrued by Elected Officials, County Auditor, Juvenile Services Director or employees in temporary positions)</i>	Yes (part-time employees receive 50% of the full-time accrual rate)	Yes (part-time employees receive 50% of the full-time accrual rate)	Yes but only for full-time employees.	Yes (part-time employees receive 50% of the full-time accrual rate)	Yes but only for full-time employees.	N/A and not accrued (proposed)	N/A and not accrued	N/A and not accrued	N/A and not accrued	N/A and not accrued
	Vacation	Sick Leave	Comp Time	Holiday Time	Floating Holiday	Emergency Leave	Civil Leave	Essential Pay	USERRA (Military Leave)	Admin Leave with Pay
<i>May be used ONLY for:</i>	Personal or recreational reasons	Only for sickness, medical and dental appointments for employee, spouse or child as defined in the FMLA policy	Personal or recreational reasons	Scheduled Holidays; for personal or recreational reasons for banked Holiday time	Personal or recreational reasons	Only for emergency repair of employee's residential home or employee's personal auto; or for Attending funerals of family or close friends	Jury Duty; Serving as a witness in a County work related legal proceeding; Time off to vote only if the polls are not open for two consecutive hours outside an employee's working hours.	Personal or recreational reasons	Absence due to Active / Reserve Military Duty	Employment related Investigations; May not be used as a form of severance pay prior to employment termination
<i>An alternative form of vacation time</i>	N/A	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
<i>May be used during FMLA absences</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
<i>Requires Prior Approval from the official, department head or supervisor, as appropriate, to take this leave type</i>	Yes	Yes if planned leave; No if unplanned leave; Certification from a Healthcare Provider stating that an absence was medically necessary and that you are fit to return to work.	Yes	No if taken on scheduled County Holiday; Yes if taking banked Holiday time	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes by submitting a copy of military orders	Yes



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	Vacation	Sick Leave	Comp Time	Holiday Time	Floating Holiday	Emergency Leave	Civil Leave	Essential Pay	USERRA (Military Leave)	Admin Leave with Pay
<i>Will continue to accrue as long as you are on paid leave; once you have expended all paid leave, accrual will cease until you return to work</i>	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes; to receive holiday pay, you must have worked or been on some type of paid leave on the day or shift immediately before and immediately after the holiday.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Hours in leave bank maybe "sold" by the employee (to receive additional pay) without prior approval of the Commissioners Court</i>	No	No	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>If you transfer to/from a Williamson County position from an Adult Probation or Health District position, you will be paid for your accrued, untaken leave as of the date of the transfer so that your balance will not become a liability for the new department</i>	Yes	No; your balance will be forfeited and not be paid out to you; your balance will be reset to "0"	Yes, for non-exempt positions or, upon department certification, for exempt positions	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No

	Vacation	Sick Leave	Comp Time	Holiday Time	Floating Holiday	Emergency Leave	Civil Leave	Essential Pay	USERRA (Military Leave)	Admin Leave with Pay
<i>For employees on shift work taking a full day off, must take this leave type at a rate equal with their assigned shift on that day; may take one shift at a time. Instead of taking multiple shifts consecutively, with the approval of the CIBL department head, Supt./MIS or</i>	Yes	Yes if planned leave or for a full Shift; No if unplanned leave for a partial shift.	Yes	No, only up to accrual rate for that holiday	No, only up to accrual rate for this type	No, only up to accrual rate for this type	No, only up to actual time taken	No	Yes, but only based upon dates provided in military orders	Yes
<i>Is accrued in the timekeeping system (Kronos) (does not apply for Adult Probation Department &amp; Health District)</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes, for non-exempt positions	Yes	Yes	No (proposed)	No	Yes, for hours when County offices are closed between 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.	No	No
<i>Maximum accrual amount (if you reach maximum accrual, no further accruals will be awarded until you have taken hours and reduced the balance below the maximum accrual amount)</i>	Based upon years of service: See vacation Chart	Accrue at 4 hours per pay period up to 480 hours; for EMS employees, accrue at 6 hours per pay period up to 672 hours	240 hours; any comp time hours granted over 240 are paid at time and a half	200 hours of unused holiday time	8 hours per fiscal year; "use it or lose it"	None (proposed); Currently 16 hours per fiscal year. "Use it or lose it"	None	None; "Use it or lose it"	15 calendar days in a fiscal year	None



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	Vacation	Sick Leave	Comp Time	Holiday Time	Floating Holiday	Emergency Leave	Civil Leave	Essential Pay	USERRA (Military Leave)	Admin Leave with Pay
<i>Paid out at termination of employment or retirement to encourage employees to give advance notice of their separation</i>	Yes	No	Yes, for non-exempt positions or, upon department certification, for exempt positions	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
<i>Upon resignation, retirement or termination of employment, total number of hours in accrued leave bank will be paid at the hourly rate of pay earned as of the last date of employment</i>	Yes	N/A	Yes, for non-exempt positions or, upon department certification, for exempt positions	Yes	No	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A
<i>Accruals will be pro-rated based upon hire date and termination date and where those fall in the first and last pay period worked</i>	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>If rehired within one year of termination, accrual rate will be reinstated at the rate you were receiving upon termination.</i>	No (proposed)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A





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## **Appendix D** Salary Schedules

Salary Schedules are available on the HR Website at [www.wilco.org/hr](http://www.wilco.org/hr),  
Click on –EmployeesII then –Employee PoliciesII  
Or  
Click on the specific Schedule links below.

**Schedule A Grade Chart** – *Elected Officials, Appointed Officials and Sr. Directors:*  
<http://www.wilco.org/Portals/0/Departments/HR/Docs/ScheduleA-GradeChart.pdf>

**Schedule B Grade Chart** - *All full-time positions not included on Schedules A or P:*  
<http://www.wilco.org/Portals/0/Departments/HR/Docs/ScheduleB-GradeChart.pdf>

**Schedule P Grade Chart** – *Peace Officer Pay Scale – Law Enforcement & Corrections:*  
<http://www.wilco.org/Portals/0/Departments/HR/Docs/Grade%20Step%20Charts%20P%201%2017%2014.pdf>



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## Appendix E Drug Free Workplace Policy

In compliance with the Texas Department of Transportation's regulations for drug and alcohol testing, Williamson County employees or potential employees who possess commercial driver's licenses (CDL) and/or operate County owned equipment or vehicles are subject to pre-employment, random, and post-accident testing. Certain employees of Williamson County Emergency Medical Services, Juvenile Services, Department of Infrastructure, Fleet Department and certain Constables are subject to pre-employment testing. Certain employees, as shown on their job description, of the Emergency Medical Services, Department of Infrastructure and Fleet Department are subject to random drug testing. All employees are subject to being tested if there is probable cause to suspect they are intoxicated while on duty.

### **WILLIAMSON COUNTY DRUG FREE WORK PLACE POLICY FOR COMMERCIAL DRIVERS LICENSE**

In compliance with The Omnibus Transportation Employee Testing Act of 1991, revised February 1994, Williamson County adopts the following Drug Free Work Place Policy for employees with Commercial Drivers Licenses in the Williamson County Department of Infrastructure.

#### **Purpose**

The objective of this policy is to develop a DRUG and ALCOHOL-FREE WORK PLACE which will help insure a safe and productive work place and to provide education for Williamson County employees working in the Williamson County Department of Infrastructure, and for employees who drive a County vehicle in the regular performance of their job duties.

Use and misuse of alcohol or drugs can and does impair the ability of an employee to perform their job duties and may endanger the employee, a co-worker, or the public, as well as property. Williamson County seeks to prevent the use, abuse, or misuse of drugs and alcohol by employees in any way which impairs their ability to perform their job duties.

#### **Policy**

1. Alcoholism and other drug addictions are recognized as diseases responsive to proper treatment, and this will be an option as long as the employee cooperates with Williamson County.
2. The manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, sale, purchase or use of a controlled substance on Williamson County premises is prohibited.
3. Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs on Williamson County premises is prohibited. The unauthorized use or possession of prescription drugs not prescribed to the employee or prescriptions taken other than in accordance with the prescribed directions of a physician is prohibited on Williamson County premises.
4. Employees who violate this policy are subject to appropriate disciplinary action including immediate termination.



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5. This policy applies to all Williamson County employees who currently hold a Commercial Driver's License for use in Williamson County employment, regardless of position and includes all temporary and part-time employees. This policy also applies to all employees who drive a Williamson County vehicle in the regular performance of their job duties.

## Definitions

1. WILLIAMSON COUNTY PREMISES – All Williamson County property including buildings (owned or leased), parking lots, vehicles, equipment, or lockers.

2. WILLIAMSON COUNTY PROPERTY – All Williamson County owned or leased property used by employees such as vehicles, lockers, desks, closets, rest rooms, etc.

3. CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE – Mind altering and/or addictive substances included under the provisions of the United States Government's Controlled Substance Act of 1970, as amended. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- a. Opiates (e.g., marijuana, codeine, methadone)
- b. Cocaine
- c. Cannabinoids (e.g., marijuana, hashish)
- d. Amphetamines
- e. Barbiturates
- f. Other narcotics and hallucinogens (e.g., phencyclidine (PCP), Methaqualone (Quaalude), peyote (LSD)).
- g. Benzodiazapines (e.g., Valium, Librium)
- h. Alcohol

4. DRUG – A drug is any chemical substance that produces a physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral change in the user

5. DRUG PARAPHERNALIA – Equipment, a product or material that is used or intended for use in concealing an illegal drug or for use in injecting, ingesting, inhaling or otherwise introducing into the human body an illegal drug or controlled substance.

6. FITNESS FOR DUTY – To work in a manner suitable for the job. To determine "fitness", a medical evaluation will include drug and/or alcohol testing.

7. ILLEGAL DRUG - an illegal drug is any drug or derivative thereof which the use, possession, sale, transfer, attempted sale or transfer, manufacture or storage of is illegal under any federal, state, or local law or regulation of any other drug, including, but not limited to, a prescription drug, used for any reason other than legitimate medical reason and inhalants used illegally.

8. REASONABLE CAUSE/REASONABLE SUSPICION - Supported by evidence strong enough to establish that a policy violation has occurred.



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9. UNDER THE INFLUENCE – The state of having a blood alcohol concentration of 0.10 or more or evidential breath testing for alcohol concentration of .02 or greater; or the state of not having normal use of mental or physical faculties resulting from the voluntary introduction into the body of any alcoholic beverage or controlled substance.

10. TESTING – Is generally defined as a urine, blood, or breath test to determine chemical or drug content. Testing can occur in the following instances:

- a. Pre-employment process.
- b. Random selection.
- c. Reasonable cause to suspect use.
- d. Injury involving employee(s) causing or contributing to the injury.
- e. On the job accident.

Testing results will remain confidential.

11. NEGATIVE TEST RESULTS – “Negative Test” results are results that indicate no alcohol or drugs in the employee’s system other than properly used prescription medication.

## General Policy Provisions

Any of the following actions constitutes a violation of the Policy and may subject any employee to disciplinary action to include immediate termination.

1. Using, selling, purchasing, transferring, possessing, manufacturing, or storing any illegal drug or drug paraphernalia, or attempting or assisting another person to do so, while in the course of employment or engaged in a Williamson County sponsored activity, on premises, in owned, leased or rented property, or on official business for Williamson County.
2. Working or reporting to work, conducting County business or being on County premises or in a County-owned, leased or rented vehicle while under the influence of an illegal drug, alcohol or in an impaired condition.
3. Switching, adulterating, or attempting to tamper with any sample submitted for medical testing, or otherwise interfering or attempting to interfere with the testing process.

## Preventative Acts

1. Employees taking drugs prescribed by their attending physician must advise their Department Head in writing of the possible side effects of such medication regarding their job performance and physical/mental capabilities. This written information must be kept confidential. All prescription drugs must be kept in the original container.
2. Any employee involved in a work related accident where alcohol or drugs are believed to be a contributing factor will be subject to an accident investigation and referred to a drug counselor.



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## Employee Assistance

1. Any employee who has an alcohol or drug problem should contact the Director of Benefits or the Senior Director of Human Resources to obtain information on a leave of absence. Employees who voluntarily enter into and participate in an approved alcohol or drug rehabilitation program will be eligible for unpaid leave for a maximum of 90 calendar days to enter such a program. Employees must explore options which minimize their time off from work and the County reserves the right to require periodic reports and/or testing as to the employee's progress and/or successful completion of the program. The time off will be without pay.
2. Employees should refer to the Third Party Administrator of Williamson County Health Benefits Program to determine whether the cost of the program they are entering will be covered under the Williamson County Health Benefits Insurance. Any expenses that are incurred and are not eligible for reimbursement under the Williamson County Health Benefits Program will be the sole responsibility of the employee.
3. An employee will not be disciplined because he or she requests to participate in a rehabilitation program. Participation within a program does not alter the at-will relationship that the County maintains with its employees or the County's right to discipline or terminate the employee for performance, misconduct, or violation of County Policy made know to the County independently from the employee's request for accommodation.

## Applicant Testing

Refusal to give written consent for a drug screening test will disqualify the candidate from consideration for employment.

### 1. OBJECTIVES

To maintain the high professional standards of the County's workforce for employees holding a Commercial Driver's License, it is imperative that individuals who use illegal drugs be screened out during the initial employment process before they are placed on the employment rolls of the county. This procedure will have a positive effect by reducing instances of illegal drug use by the employees working within the County and will provide for a safer work environment. For these reasons, drug testing will be required of all applicants who hold a Commercial Driver's License for use with Williamson County.

### 2. VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Every vacancy announcement, for positions requiring a Commercial Driver's License, designated for applicant testing shall state:

"Any applicant tentatively selected for this position will be required to submit to a testing to screen for illegal drug use prior to employment."

In addition, each applicant will be notified that employment in the position will be contingent upon a negative drug test result. Failure of the vacancy announcement to contain this announcement will not preclude the applicant testing if advance written notice is provided to applicants in some other manner.





# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## 3. CONSEQUENCES

Williamson County will decline to extend a final offer of employment to any applicant with a verified positive test result, and such applicant will not be reconsidered for employment by the County for a period of one year. The Human Resources Department working on the applicant's file shall be directed to object the applicant on the basis of failure to pass the physical, a lack of personal characteristics necessary to relate to public employment or a failure to support the goals of the County. The County shall inform the applicant that a confirmed presence of an illegal drug in the applicant's urine precludes the County from hiring the applicant.

## EMPLOYEE TESTING

Refusal by an employee to submit to screen testing will be considered cause for discharge.

### 1. OBJECTIVE

Williamson County's objective is to provide a safe, drug-free environment for employees.

### 2. WHEN

a. POST ACCIDENT – Conducted after accidents on employees whose performance could have contributed to the accident and for all fatal accidents.

b. REASONABLE SUSPICION – Conducted when a trained supervisor or County official observes behavior or appearance that is characteristic of drug or alcohol misuse. When, as determined by the immediate supervisor or County official that reasonable grounds exist to believe that an employee is impaired or an employee's unsatisfactory behavior or job performance suggest to management that substance abuse may be a contributing factor, the County reserves the right to require an immediate fitness for duty examination such as a medical evaluation including drug and/or alcohol testing. Refusal to participate in such an evaluation shall be considered equivalent to a positive result and shall result in immediate dismissal.

c. RANDOM – Conducted on a random unannounced basis just before, during or just after performance of safety-sensitive functions. The employees will be selected on a random basis. The testing times and dates are unannounced and are with unpredictable frequency throughout the year. Each year, the number of random tests must equal at least 50% of the Commercial Driver's License holding employees. Some employees may be tested more than once in a year. Once notified for selection, however, an employee must report to a collection site to accomplish the specimen collection for drug/alcohol testing.

d. RETURN-TO-DUTY AND FOLLOW-UP – Conducted when an employee who has violated the prohibited drug/alcohol conduct standards returns to performing safety-sensitive duties. Follow-up tests are unannounced and at least six (6) tests will be conducted during the first twelve (12) months after return to duty. Follow-up testing may be extended for up to sixty (60) months following return to duty.

## 3. CONSEQUENCES

A positive test shall mean either the presence of a drug and/or alcohol. Sample testing procedures shall conform to Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) certified and monitored laboratories before



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



the test may be used as a basis for any action. Both screening and confirmatory testing will follow the guidelines adopted by the DHHS.

a. When a screen test is positive for the first time but no evidence of drug or alcohol use on the job exists, the employee will be suspended with pay until all County required testing and treatment is completed. The employee will be required to obtain a written evaluation for drug abuse from a recognized professional and or institution at the employees own expense. If there is evidence of drug or alcohol use on the job, the employee may be disciplined or discharged and will not be eligible for reinstatement.

b. To be reinstated to a job, an employee must have a signed release from a medical doctor stating that they are fit for work. The employee must submit to another screen test and have a negative result within six (6) weeks from the date they were suspended; otherwise, they will be discharged. The County will decide when the test shall be administered. Before the employee returns to work, they will be required to sign a reinstatement agreement that states under what conditions the employee will be reinstated and that random drug testing may be conducted for one year.

c. An employee who has been suspended for a positive drug or alcohol test and is allowed to return to work will be immediately discharged for a positive result on any confirmatory drug or alcohol test.

## 4. POLICY PARAMETERS

a. For confidentiality, only department heads or County officials who have a need to know will be furnished information regarding positive results of fitness for duty examinations. Employee's privacy will be protected and the employer, without exception, will punish any breach of the workers' privacy and confidentiality.

b. The County will use only laboratories that are certified under appropriate federal and/or state regulations. The laboratories will follow the guidelines adopted by the United States Department of Health and Human Services for workplace drug testing.

c. The employee will provide a specimen in a location that affords privacy and the "collector" seals and labels the specimen, completes the chain of custody documents, and prepares the specimen and accompanying paperwork for shipment to a drug testing laboratory. The specimen collection procedures and chain of custody ensure that the specimen's security, proper identification and integrity are not compromised. The Omnibus Act requires all specimens be split into two bottles labeled "primary" and a "split" specimen. Both bottles are sent to the laboratory. Only the primary specimen is opened and used for urinalysis. The split specimen remains sealed and stored at the lab. If the analysis of the primary specimen confirms the presence of illegal, controlled substances, the employee has seventy-two (72) hours to request the split specimen be sent to another approved DHHS certified laboratory for analysis. This split specimen procedure provides the employee with an opportunity for a "second opinion". Only conclusive results are to be reported to the County. Both tests must be positive or the results are considered to be inconclusive.



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual

## Supervisory and Employee Training

Supervisors will receive training regarding the Drug and Alcohol Policy. All employees who are included under this policy will receive a copy of the Drug and Alcohol Policy.

## Disciplinary Action

Any employee suspected of violating this Policy will be immediately suspended without pay pending a complete investigation. During the course of the investigation, the suspected employee shall have the opportunity to provide an explanation. In the event that a determination is made by the County that the employee has violated this Policy, the employee shall be immediately terminated. Should a determination be made that the employee made no violation the employee will be reinstated without penalty.

## Coordination with Law Enforcement Agencies

The sale, use, purchase, transfer or possession of an illegal drug or drug paraphernalia is a violation of the law. Williamson County will report information concerning possession, distribution, or use of any illegal drugs to law enforcement officials. Any search and seizure will be conducted by the contacted law enforcement agency. Williamson County will cooperate fully in the prosecution and/or conviction of any violation of the law.

## Reservation of Rights

Williamson County reserves the right to interpret, suspend, cancel or dispute, with or without notice, all or any part of this policy, or procedures or benefits discussed herein. Employees will be notified before implementation of any change.

Although adherence to the Policy is considered a condition of continued employment, nothing in this Policy alters an employees' status and shall not constitute or be deemed a contract or promise of employment. Employees remain free to resign their employment at any time for any reason, without notice, and Williamson County retains the right to terminate any employee at any time, for any reason, with or without notice.

## Other Laws and Regulations

The provisions of this Policy shall apply in addition to, and shall be subordinated to, any requirements imposed by applicable federal, state or local laws, regulations or judicial decisions. Unenforceable provisions of this Policy, as imposed by applicable law, shall be deemed to be deleted.



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## **Appendix F**

### **Workplace Safety and Security Policy (Emergency Services Department)**

- 1) Williamson County promotes a safe and secure work environment for its employees. County officials, department heads, and employees shall work together to maintain a work environment that is free from violence, threats of violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior. All reports of incidents will be investigated and appropriate actions taken.
  - a) Examples of such behavior include, but are not limited to:
    - i) Carrying illegal weapons on County premises
    - ii) Physical assault on County premises
    - iii) Oral or written statements, gestures, or expressions that communicate a direct or indirect threat of physical harm, bullying or harassment
- 2) County officials, department heads, supervisors, and other employees shall immediately report violent, harassing, intimidating, or other disruptive behavior, to include the presence of weapons to their respective supervisor. The supervisor shall contact the Senior Director of Human Resources and the County Attorney when necessary. The primary means of workplace violence prevention is to recognize and report early warning signs.
- 3) The imminent threat of violence or acts of violence shall be reported immediately to law enforcement officials by calling 911 or by following department specific security procedures as defined by the department.
- 4) Employees that violate this policy are subject to the removal from the premises or immediate disciplinary action, up to termination and criminal prosecution.
  - a) Employees that are suspended or terminated as the result of a violation of this policy may be temporarily or permanently barred from County premises. The barring of an employee may initially be a verbal order but will be provided in written documentation which shall include the statement, "Employee shall contact the Senior Director of Human Resources or County Attorney for all future communications". When possible a county law enforcement official should be present when the verbal order barring the employee from County premises is given.
  - b) Suspended employees may be required to surrender all County property to include but not limited to ID badge(s), uniforms, computer, pagers, cell phones, etc.
  - c) Suspended employees may have limited or no access to the County network to include but not limited to email, Kronos, Oracle, etc. and access to any public safety technology programs shall be suspended immediately.
- 5) Members of the general public exhibiting violent or threatening behavior will be subject to removal or legal action, as appropriate.



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



Employees should be aware of potential safety risks and ways to minimize risks for themselves, co-workers and the public.

## Fire

Incidents involving fire are often caused by human carelessness while performing daily activities/functions or by the improper discarding of materials with the potential to ignite a fire. The following list includes but is too limited to activities that could ignite a fire in the workplace either immediately or even hours later.

- Discarded smoking materials (used cigarettes or pipe tobacco)
- Discarded burnt popcorn (bagged microwave popcorn that is unopened and discarded immediately after cooking without being cooled)
- Candles
- Use of welder, cutting torch, or soldering iron
- Equipment with frayed or damaged cords
- Excessive use of extension cords or circuit overload
- Oil soaked rags tossed into a trash receptacle
- The use of flammable materials in/or around areas that contain a source of ignition. (spray solvents or petroleum based adhesives near an appliance with a pilot light or other switch mechanism that may create an arc)

In the event of a fire employees should respond by following the steps listed below:

- **R** – Rescue anyone who requires assistance evacuating the facility.
- **A** – Alert other employees, activate alarm pull stations, and call 911.
- **C** – Contain the fire by closing doors to the affected area; do not open windows as this will increase fire activity.
- **E** – Evacuate the facility immediately; employees should not re-enter the facility upon exiting or slow their exit by retrieving personal items.
- **E** – Extinguish only if the fire is small and contained (*example: in a trash can*) or if the employee is trapped by the fire.

Employees that elect to try and extinguish a small contained fire or that must extinguish the fire in-order to escape should utilize an approved fire extinguisher using the steps listed below:

- **P** – Pull the pin on the handle.
- **A** – Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire.
- **S** – Squeeze the handle
- **S** – Sweep the base of the fire with the dry chemical stream.

## Evacuation

Facilities may require the immediate evacuation of all employees, customers, or guest as the result of but not limited to the following:



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- Fire
- Bomb Threat
- Hostile Subject
- Active Shooter
- Terrorism
- Hazardous Chemicals
- Building Damage / Instability
- Other

The manager / supervisor of employees are ultimately responsible for their safe evacuation. Some departments and/or facilities may have Safety Liaisons or other designated individuals to assist or facilitate the evacuation.

## Pre-evacuation Procedures

1. The manager/supervisor or designee of each department/facility should predetermine evacuation routes and employee Rally Points.
  - a. Rally Points should be located a safe distance from the facility to ensure that emergency vehicles/personnel have room to maneuver and that in the event of a building collapse employees are clear of the collapse zone. (Rule of Thumb: a minimum of 3 times the buildings height) *Use caution if Rally Points are located across streets.*
  - b. Employees should be informed of the designated Rally Points prior to an event.
2. The manager/supervisor or designee should maintain a current employee roster to be used for employee roll call. (preferably kept on a clipboard with a pen/pencil)
3. The manager/supervisor should ensure that all designated exit pathways are clear identified and free of obstruction. Employees should assist in keeping exits open and clear or report obstructions to their manager/supervisor.

The procedures for evacuation, with the exceptions of active shooter and terrorism, are generally the same. The following outlines the steps for an orderly evacuation:

## Evacuation Procedures

1. At the sound of an audible/visual fire alarm or an evacuation order is given by a manager or employee:
  - a. Employees should immediately stop their current activities and vacate the facility.
  - b. Personal belongings may be taken if they do not slow or impede your exit however, employees not currently collocated with their belongings should not attempt to retrieve them.
2. The manager is responsible to ensure that all employees, visitors, or customers evacuate the facility.
  - a. Managers of large departments or located in large facilities may elect to appoint employees as safety representatives with the responsibility to aid in the evacuation process and to ensure personnel accountability.
    - i. Safety representatives should pre-identify individuals that may require additional assistance in evacuating secondary to physical limitations and



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- prepare a specific plan for evacuation. (This may be more common or prevalent in multi-story facilities in which the elevator may not be used for evacuation)
- ii. Safety representatives should be the last individuals to leave the area or facility and to ensure that everyone has evacuated by checking all the restrooms, offices, cubicles, or other common areas. (This should not be performed if doing so would immediately place the person's safety and health at risk.)
  - iii. Safety representatives should close doors to areas, rooms, or office spaces as they clear each room. This will signify that the room has been cleared and in the instance of fire or chemical release will slow the progression or the fire or toxic fumes while providing added protection to vital equipment and information.
  - iv. Safety representatives, once all employees have evacuated, should report to the manager or designee that all areas are clear.
- b. Managers or designee should perform a role call at the "Rally Point" to ensure that all employees are accounted for.
    - i. A current employee roster should be kept in a location that is easily accessible by the manager or designee to retrieve during an evacuation.
    - ii. Knowing that not all employees on the roster will be present during an evacuation it is essential that employees communicate with their managers or coworkers in regards to their absences from their assigned work areas. (Examples: offsite meeting, vacation, sick, training, etc.)
    - iii. Individuals that are thought or known to remain inside the facility should be reported immediately to the responding agencies. (It may be necessary to provide detailed instructions on the location of the individual.)
- 3. The manager or facility representative shall serve as the liaison between response agencies and Williamson County until a Facilities or other County Representative arrives to assume that role.
  - 4. The manager is responsible for ensuring that employees are trained in evacuation procedures.
    - a. Employees should be provided with evacuation procedures when they are a new employee or transferred/moved to a new facility or department.
      - i. Each evacuation route and exit door located in the employees work area or area of access shall be identified.
      - ii. The employee's primary evacuation route shall be identified.
      - iii. Annually or during/after construction or renovation employees should receive evacuation training.
      - iv. Quarterly, employees should drill evacuation procedures. This can be accomplished through a complete evacuation of the facility or area within a facility. To limit the disruption of work drills maybe scheduled in conjunction with employee breaks. (Have employees use primary exits to leave to facility instead of primary doors if different from primary evacuation routes.)

The evacuation of a facility during acts of violence may differ from that of other emergencies. The following are guidelines that will aid in either the safe exit of the facility or in the event an employee is unable to evacuate. See the section on Workplace violence for specific instructions.



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual

## Workplace Violence

The threat of workplace violence continues to increase and the best defense is to recognize potential threats and/or report known threats to the manager or law enforcement (911)

### Known Threats

1. Non-domestic Violence: A specific individual or group makes threatening statements directed at an individual, department, or Williamson County in general.
2. Domestic Violence: A specific individual makes specific threats or statements to an employee with regards to a past, present, or unwanted relationship.
  - a. Employees that are in a situation where physical violence has occurred, has been threatened, or a restraining order has been issued should report to the manager.
  - b. Working to maintain the employee's privacy the manager and employee should decide on the best course of action and level of caution to be taken in regards to advising other employees of the situation.

### Unknown Threats

1. Incidents of workplace violence may occur with no advanced notice to the employee. Perpetrators of workplace violence may be customers, friends / relatives of employees, or employees themselves. The best defense to escalating violence is to recognize warning signs and act early.
  - a. Suspicion of illicit drug or alcohol use
  - b. Loud, aggressive, or increasing argumentative behavior
  - c. Individuals described as "Loners"
  - d. Individuals who hold a grudge or are hypersensitive to criticism
  - e. Individuals that are proven to be untrustworthy
  - f. Individual with a general or persistent bad attitude
  - g. Individual with a sudden or dramatic change in mood or demeanor
  - h. Individual with a recent personal hardship; divorce, termination, bankruptcy, or death of a relative or close friend
  - i. Individual with a history of violence or threats of violence
2. Employees should report the actions or statements of others, to the manager, that are real or perceived to be of a threatening nature to that employee.
3. Employees should remain alert to their surroundings at all times.
  - a. Recognize and listen to conversations that appear to be escalating in temperament or becoming extremely argumentative.
  - b. Look for and recognize unauthorized weapons.
  - c. Look for persons that appear to be out of place or have no reason for being in the facility.
4. Williamson County maintains a "Zero Tolerance" for the threat of or actual workplace violence by employees, visitors, or customers.
  - a. In any instance of physical violence, regardless of the individual, employees should first call "911" or alert building security.



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- b. Employees that are party to verbal threats, threatening gestures, physical violence, vandalism, property destruction, or the carrying of unauthorized firearms will be subject to criminal and/or civil law and when necessary combined actions of the employee's manager, director, Human Resources Department, and the County Attorney's Office.
5. Incidents involving an individual(s) that enter a facility with the intent to injury or cause the death of the occupants will likely occur with little to no warning. Employees must prepare themselves before an incident occurs to increase their chance of survival. The following is a recognized program developed to assist individuals involved in workplace violence.

## **"RUN, HIDE, FIGHT"- Surviving and Active Shooter Event**

Run: When an active shooter is in your vicinity.

1. If there is an escape path, attempt to evacuate.
2. Evacuate whether others agree to or not.
3. Leave your belongings behind.
4. Help others to escape if possible.
5. Prevent others from entering the area.
6. Call 911 when you are safe.

Hide: If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide.

1. Lock and/or blockade the door.
2. Silence your cell phone.
3. Hide behind large objects.
4. Remain very quiet.
5. Your hiding space should:
  - a. Be out of the shooter's view.
  - b. Provide protection if shots are fired in your direction.
  - c. Not trap or restrict your options for movement.

Fight: As a last resort, and only if your life is in danger:

1. Attempt to incapacitate the shooter.
2. Act with physical aggression.
3. Improvise weapons.
4. Commit to your actions.

When Law Enforcement arrives:

1. Remain calm and follow instructions.
2. Keep your hands visible at all times.
3. Avoid pointing or yelling.
4. Know that help for the injured is on its way.

Run, Hide, Fight (Surviving an active shooter event) is a Department of Homeland Security Funded Project of the Regional Catastrophic Planning Initiative produced by the City of Houston Mayor's Office of Public Safety and Homeland Security. For additional information employees should view the video available at [www.readyhoustontx.gov](http://www.readyhoustontx.gov).



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual

## Severe Weather

Williamson County is subject to severe weather to include Severe Thunderstorms, Tornadoes, Flash Floods, and Freezing Precipitation. Each circumstance may require the actions of employees to maintain their safety and the safety of their co-workers.

### Definitions:

- 1) **Advisory:** Highlights special weather conditions that are less serious than a warning. They are for events that may cause significant inconvenience, and if caution is not exercised, it could lead to situations that may threaten life and/or property.
- 2) **Watch:** A watch is used when the risk of a hazardous weather or hydrologic event has increased significantly, but its occurrence, location, and/or timing is still uncertain. It is intended to provide enough lead time so that those who need to set their plans in motion can do so.
- 3) **Warning:** A warning is issued when a hazardous weather or hydrologic event is occurring, is imminent, or has a high probability of occurring. A warning is used for conditions posing a threat to life or property.

### Severe Thunderstorm or Tornado

A thunderstorm that produces a tornado, winds of at least 58 mph (50 knots), and/or hail at least 1" in diameter. Structural wind damage may imply the occurrence of a severe thunderstorm. A thunderstorm wind equal to or greater than 40 mph (35 knots) and/or hail of at least 1" is defined as approaching severe.

- 1) **Employee Actions – Indoor**
  - a) **Watch Conditions**
    - i) Monitor weather conditions by radio, television, or internet.
    - ii) Review location of severe weather sheltering.
    - iii) Ensure that emergency equipment is functioning properly.
      - (1) Flashlight
      - (2) Battery powered radio
    - iv) Save and/or back-up computer documents frequently.
    - v) Safety representative should obtain employee roster.
  - b) **Warning Conditions**
    - i) Move away from windows and doors.
    - ii) Take shelter until the threat has passed.
      - (1) Lowest level of the building
      - (2) In the center of the building away from doors, windows, or glass.
    - iii) Ensure the safety of customers and visitors.
    - iv) Safety representative should assist individuals that have mobility impairments move to a safe location.
    - v) Safety representative should report to the safe location with the roster, take roll, and report to the manager / supervisor.
    - vi) As the storm approaches persons should get as low as possible and protect their head from flying debris.



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## 2) Employee Actions – Outdoor

### a) Watch Conditions

- i) Monitor weather conditions by radio, television, or internet.
- ii) Review area for potential shelters near the area.
- iii) Alter work schedules or assignments when possible.
- iv) Alter driving routes to avoid known areas of flooding.
- v) Ensure that emergency equipment is functioning properly.
  - (1) Flashlight
  - (2) Battery powered radio
- vi) Notify manager / supervisor or other of your location.

### b) Warning Conditions

- i) Relocate to a sturdy structure when possible, a vehicle provides only limited protection.
- ii) Take shelter until the threat has passed.
  - (1) Lowest level of the building
  - (2) In the center of the building away from doors, windows, or glass.
- iii) If unable to seek indoor shelter, lie flat in a ditch or other low area to protect against wind and flying debris. It is not recommended to seek shelter under a bridge during a tornadic event.
- iv) When possible notify the manager / supervisor or other of your sheltering location prior to and after the storm passes.
- v) As the storm approaches persons should get as low as possible and protect their head from flying debris.

## Flash Flood

A flash flood is a rapid and extreme flow of high water into a normally dry area, or a rapid water level rise in a stream or creek above a predetermined flood level, beginning within six hours of the causative event (e.g., intense rainfall, dam failure, ice jam). However, the actual time threshold may vary in different parts of the country. Ongoing flooding can intensify to flash flooding in cases where intense rainfall results in a rapid surge of rising flood waters.

## 1) Employee Actions

### a) Watch Conditions

- i) Monitor weather conditions by radio, television, or internet.
- ii) Consider cancelling or postponing activities that require driving.
- iii) If near an area that is prone to flooding, remain alert to rising water and the need for evacuation.

### b) Warning Conditions

- i) Limit work related driving to emergency only.
- ii) Monitor rising water in areas near waterways, ditches, or other low lying areas.
- iii) Evacuate building if required.



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## Winter Weather

Frozen precipitation in the form of snow, sleet, or freezing rain that presents a threat to life and property due to accumulation.

Winter Storm Watch: When there is a potential for heavy snow or significant ice accumulations, usually at least 24 to 36 hours in advance. The criteria for this watch can vary from place to place.

Winter Weather Advisory: When a low pressure system produces a combination of winter weather (snow, freezing rain, sleet, etc.) that present a hazard, but does not meet warning criteria.

Winter Storm Warning: When a winter storm is producing or is forecast to produce heavy snow or significant ice accumulations. The criteria for this warning can vary from place to place.

- 1) Employee Actions
  - a) Advisory or Watch
    - i) Monitor weather conditions by radio, television, or internet.
    - ii) Prepare to allow for additional time for travel if required.
    - iii) Ensure that clothing is sufficient for the conditions.
    - iv) Remain alert for ice accumulations on roadways and walking surfaces.
    - v) When walking or driving avoid steep inclines when possible.
  - b) Warning
    - i) Limit work related to driving to essential or emergency activities only.
    - ii) Postpone or reschedule activities that require travel.
    - iii) Notify the Facilities Department to report areas that require "Sanding" to reduce the hazards associated with slips and trips.
    - iv) Remain alert for messages relating to County operations.

## **County Operations**

Williamson County maintains normal operating hours of Monday – Friday from 8am-5pm for the majority of departments with the exceptions of Emergency Communications, EMS, Sheriff's Office, and Constable's Offices. Conditions that place added risk to the life, safety and health of employees may result in the normal operations of Williamson County to cease. The decision to alter or cease all non-essential operations is at the discretion of the County Judge based upon the recommendations of the Emergency Management Coordinator.

## Evaluation Criteria

- 1) Severe weather
  - a) Field Reports
  - b) Forecast
  - c) Other governmental agencies closing
- 2) Declared county emergency
- 3) Declared public health emergency



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## Employee Communications / Notifications

- 1) The county Public Information Officer (PIO) shall be notified when the county's operational status has changed.
  - a) If during normal operational hours, the PIO will notify all county employees through the email system, update the county website and alert the media.
  - b) If during non-operational hours, the PIO will notify employees through the email system, update the county website, record a voicemail for employees, and notify the media.
- 2) Additionally personnel or departments listed as essential may be notified through the Department of Emergency Communications or by the Office of Emergency Management through the use of the CAD system, paging system, or emergency notification system.

## Essential Personnel

During emergencies or declared disasters the county must maintain the Continuity of Government, Continuity of Operations, and Public Safety Operations. The following departments are considered essential and employees are required to report for duty as scheduled unless otherwise directed by the department head or designee. During this time these employees may be required to work extended or altered hours / schedules to meet the demands of the emergency.

## Essential Departments / Personnel

### County Sheriff

Sheriff's Office

County Jail

### Constable's Office (4)

### Emergency Services

Emergency Communications

Emergency Medical Services

Hazardous Materials Response

Mobile Outreach Team

Office of Emergency Management

Wireless Communications

### Infrastructure Services

Building Maintenance

Fleet Services

Road and Bridge

### Juvenile Services

Academy

Detention

### Technology Services

ITS

GIS

PSTP

Other Employees designated by the department head

Employees that are designated to function in the Emergency Operations Center





# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## Bomb Threats

County employees, when confronted with the threat of a bomb or discover a suspicious package should follow the steps listed below to aid law enforcement officials, public safety agencies, and to help maintain the safety of other employees.

### General Actions

- 1) Remain calm
- 2) Notify law enforcement agencies by dialing 911.
- 3) Evacuate the building / facility if threat or package is deemed credible or suspect, when in doubt evacuate. (Do not utilize the fire alarm system.)
- 4) Do not utilize cellular items or mobile radios as they may activate the device.
- 5) Do not congregate near the building, relocate a safe distance until cleared to re-enter by responding agencies.

### Threat by phone:

- 1) Remain Calm and follow the ATF Bomb Threat Checklist.
- 2) Exact Time of call
- 3) Exact words of the caller
- 4) Questions to Ask
  - (1) When is bomb going to explode?
  - (2) Where is the bomb?
  - (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) Where are you calling from? (Also note what is on the caller id screen)
  - (9) What is your address?
  - (10) What is your name? (Do not ask as first question, may make them hang-up)
- 5) Caller's Voice

Calm	Disguised	Nasal	Angry	Broken
Stutter	Slow	Sincere	Lisp	Rapid
Giggling	Deep	Crying	Squeaky	Excited
Stressed	Accent	Loud	Slurred	Normal
- 6) Additional Information
- 7) Is the caller's voice familiar, whom did it sound like?
- 8) Were there any background noises?
- 9) Remarks:
- 10) Person receiving the call?
- 11) Telephone number call received at:
- 12) Date:



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## Written Threats

- 1) Minimize the handling of the letter or item.
- 2) Identify anyone that had touched the letter or item.

## Electronic Threats (email, text, social media, other)

- 1) Do not delete the message.
- 2) Print the message if able.
- 3) Document the sender information (example: email address, alias, phone number, etc.)

## Suspicious Packages

- 1) Warning Signs
  - a) Powdery substance
  - b) Oily stains
  - c) Unusual odors
  - d) Excessive postage
  - e) No return address
  - f) Excessive packaging material: tape, string, etc.
  - g) Excessive weight
- 2) Call 911
- 3) Do not touch the package
- 4) Do not shake or empty contents of the package
- 5) Do not relocate to another area
- 6) Secure the room and turn off HVAC
- 7) Identify everyone who had contact with the package or who was in close proximity to the package and instruct them to minimize contact with others and to relocate as a group away from others. This will limit the spread of contamination to non-affected employees.



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## **Appendix G** **Vehicle Management & Use Policy** **(Fleet Committee)**

### **Overview**

It is the intent of Williamson County to operate county-owned or leased motor vehicles (Fleet), equipment, and personal vehicles used on county business in the safest manner possible. We will only allow drivers who meet our hiring criteria to drive on county business and expect our drivers to comply with our safety policies and procedures and state law in order to do our part to make the roads as safe as possible.

### **Purpose**

To outline Williamson County's commitment to, and expectations of, those who operate county-owned or leased vehicles, equipment, and personal vehicles used while conducting county business.

### **Application**

This policy applies to all employees who operate motor vehicles and equipment while conducting county business. This includes county-owned or leased vehicles, equipment, and personal vehicles while conducting county business. This policy is not intended to supersede any departmental policy that may be more stringent or restrictive.

### **Program Coordinator**

The Human Resources Department has been designated as the county contact with the insurance carrier. The Director of HR Analytics and Administration shall be the person designated to receive most reporting forms mentioned in this policy. The HR Department has primary responsibility for accident prevention, safety training, and accident investigation. Elected officials/department heads, managers and supervisors are designated to enforce the policy at the departmental level.

### **County Responsibilities**

The county will:

- Provide vehicles that meet all federal/state mandated safety requirements.
- Require driving records at the time of hire for all drivers that will be assigned to operate county-owned or leased vehicles and equipment on county business.
- Maintain a list of drivers authorized to operate county-owned vehicles on county business.
- Support and enforce the County Vehicle Management & Use Policy.
- Check driving records for county employees who operate their personal or leased vehicles on county business, if requested to do so. (The county's insurance carrier will perform an annual check of drivers who operate county-owned or leased vehicles).
- Notify officials and department heads of status changes involving employees who operate personal and county-owned or leased vehicles.



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual

## Specific Policies and Procedures

**I. County-owned or Leased Vehicles and Equipment (Note: references to leased vehicles and equipment do not apply to rental cars or vans used on a temporary basis for employee travel or other approved temporary uses.)**

### Driver List

All employees that will operate a county-owned or leased vehicle and equipment on county business must be on the list of approved drivers. The list will indicate the driver's qualification status. Only drivers on the list may operate county-owned or leased vehicles and equipment. Any changes in employee qualifications will be reported to the HR Department. All new drivers and new hires employed into positions which require driving a county-owned or leased vehicle and/or equipment shall be indicated on a payroll action sheet. The list of approved drivers will be maintained in Oracle by the HR Department.

### Driver Qualifications

Every driver on the driver's list must meet the point qualification for drivers as shown in Appendix A., *Driver Qualification Criteria*. Each driver of county-owned or leased vehicles and equipment will have a MVR check on an annual basis. Traffic violations on or off the job will be counted against drivers for insurance and employment purposes. Drivers not meeting the qualification standard may be removed from positions requiring driving. Drivers removed from positions requiring driving may be reassigned according to specific department policies if they qualify for currently available positions that do not require driving. If they do not qualify for a current position that does not require driving, they may be terminated.

### Safe Vehicle Operation

Drivers will operate vehicles and equipment in a safe and lawful manner and do what is reasonably expected to avoid fleet incidents/crashes and injuries to passengers.

### Vehicle Restraints

Drivers will ensure that all occupants of the vehicle wear seat belts at all times when possible, when the vehicle is in use. Passengers should not travel in vehicles that are not equipped with restraints in areas of the vehicle intended for cargo or where seats with restraints are not available.

### Vehicle Security

All vehicles should be locked when not in use. Vehicles should be parked in a secure location and valuables should be secured out of sight when the vehicle is not in use.

### Driving Records

Drivers are expected to maintain a driving record that allows them to meet the qualification criteria outlined in Appendix A.

### Operating Vehicles While Impaired

Drivers shall not operate the vehicle/equipment while under the influence of drugs, alcohol or under any other conditions in which the driver's ability to operate the vehicle or equipment safely is inhibited or impaired. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to immediate disciplinary action, up to dismissal from employment. See the Williamson County Drug Free Workplace Policy for further information.



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## **Tobacco-Free Workplace**

In conjunction with an organization-wide Wellness Program, the county has adopted a policy prohibiting tobacco use within county buildings or offices. The use of tobacco products in county-owned vehicles and equipment is also prohibited. Employees who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

## **Vehicle Inspection**

It is the responsibility of fleet users to perform routine pre and/or post inspections on vehicles and equipment. Departments should establish policies to insure that checks are accomplished. Inspection criteria may vary for each county office or department, and for each type of vehicle or equipment. Therefore, inspection criteria should be coordinated with and approved by Fleet Services. The following are basic rules of thumb for inspecting vehicles and equipment that are recommended for individual department policies.

### **Pre Trip Inspection:**

1. Perform a visual walk around inspection of the vehicle for fluid leaks or obvious damage.
2. Inspect the following fluid levels where appropriate.
  - a. Engine oil
  - b. Battery fluid levels
  - c. Cooling system level
  - d. Hydraulic oil
  - e. Transmission fluid (after warm up)
  - f. Inspect the engine compartment for loose or frayed belts, hoses, etc.
  - g. Check tire pressure to insure compliance with the manufacturer's specifications.

Vehicles with defects that affect the vehicles' safety should not be driven until the vehicle is repaired.

## **Vehicle Maintenance**

The vehicles and equipment owned or leased by the county are on a preventative maintenance schedule based on miles or hours of operation. Any repairs needed to ensure the safe operation of the vehicle/equipment shall be performed prior to the vehicle being used.

## **Vehicle Operation**

Drivers should operate the vehicles/equipment per the guidelines in the manufacturer's operating manual. Guidelines regarding not using cruise control in adverse weather conditions must be followed. Drivers are expected to be familiar with a vehicle/equipment prior to using it and be able to operate lights, horn, emergency flashers and other equipment.

## **Towing trailers on county business:**

Towing of trailers while on county business is prohibited, unless approved by the employee's official or department head as necessary for legitimate work-related duties. Trailers owned by the county should be towed by county-owned or leased vehicles.



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## **Non Business Use**

Drivers shall not permit the vehicle to be in custody or control of, or to be operated by, any person not authorized to operate a county-owned or leased vehicle. The use of county equipment or vehicles for personal use is prohibited by law.

## **Unauthorized Use**

Employee agrees to indemnify and hold harmless Williamson County from and against any and all losses, costs, judgments, damages, claims or liabilities growing out of or resulting from any unauthorized use of a county or leased vehicle or from use of said vehicle by an unauthorized driver having care, control or custody of said vehicle.

## **Fleet Incident/Crash/Vandalism Reporting**

Drivers must report all fleet incidents/crashes/vandalism involving a county-owned or leased vehicle and equipment to the proper chain of command in their department. Prompt reporting is essential to limit liability, and employees are expected to report all fleet incidents/crashes as soon as possible. The designated department representative shall report all fleet incidents/crashes/vandalism to the HR Department as soon as possible using the Williamson County Fleet Incident/Crash/Vandalism report. Departments may use a departmental form, as long as the form contains at a minimum, the information contained in the Williamson County Fleet Incident/Crash/Vandalism report.

A fleet incident/crash shall be defined as any damage incurred to a county-owned or leased vehicle or equipment regardless of fault. This shall include collisions involving other vehicles and equipment, obstacles, pedestrians, animals, overturning, jackknifing, vandalism and other damage that is not considered normal wear and tear. Vandalism shall be defined as the act of maliciously damaging county-owned or leased vehicles or equipment. Fleet incidents are those that would be considered minor due to the cost of repairs or that cause no damage to the county-owned or leased vehicle/equipment, and minimal damage to property, obstacles, and animals.

All fleet incidents/crashes involving county-owned or leased vehicles and equipment must be reported to the employee's supervisor or dispatch immediately unless the employee is injured and unable to do so.

If an employee is involved in a crash, the following procedures apply:

- (1) Contact Department foreman, supervisor, or department designee or call 911 to report the crash. Request EMS if anyone has been injured.
- (2) Wait for the emergency responders.
- (3) Do not attempt to assist any injured parties except under the direction of a law enforcement officer or a medical responder unless conditions exist that will cause further injury or death if immediate actions are not taken (i.e. drowning, proximity to fire).
- (4) Get the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all witnesses to the crash.
- (5) Note the location, time of day, weather, and road conditions.



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- (6) Provide only your name, department, and the department phone number to others involved in the crash.
- (7) Answer any question asked by the responding law enforcement officer.
- (8) Do not admit any guilt or liability.
- (9) Department designee shall fill out a Williamson County Fleet Incident/Crash/Vandalism report and provide a copy to the HR Department.

## **Crash Investigation and Data Analysis**

- (a) The HR Department will review all fleet incidents, crashes, and vandalism involving county-owned or leased vehicles/equipment, and report findings to the elected or appointed department head or his or her designated person. In investigations, the HR Department may assist with determining facts and whether the employee was at fault.
- (b) When the facts are known, the foreman, supervisor and/or department designee, and the HR Department will determine the best strategy to prevent a recurrence of this type of fleet incident, crash, and or vandalism. The official or department head reviews the findings and recommendations and is responsible for implementing corrective action.

## **Claims Settlement**

- (a) A department designee must report all crashes to the HR Department using the Williamson County Fleet Incident/Crash/Vandalism report. Texas Association of Counties Loss Notice form will be required when crashes involve a third party.
- (b) The department designee shall work with the insurance carrier and the HR Department on any further follow up information needed to settle claims.

If the other party is at fault in a fleet incident, crash, or vandalism with a county-owned vehicle or equipment, then the HR Department, working with the department designee, is to file a claim with the other party's insurance. The county's insurance carrier can assist with this process.

- (c) The HR Department shall forward a copy of the Fleet Incident/Crash/Vandalism report to the County Auditor once the costs of all damages have been determined.

## **Fleet Incident/Crash/Vandalism Review**

Each fleet incident/crash/vandalism involving a county-owned or leased vehicle or equipment will be reviewed by the department to determine if the driver did everything they reasonably could to avoid the crash. Each fleet incident/crash/vandalism will be classified as preventable or non-preventable. Fleet incident/crash/vandalism preventability will be used in determining a driver's qualification to operate county-owned or leased vehicles and equipment.

## **Motor Vehicle Records**

Williamson County employees must exercise the utmost care in the use of county-owned or leased equipment and vehicles to minimize damage. In order to reinforce the importance of individual responsibility for complying with this policy and preventing accidents, the policy requires that corrective



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action be taken against drivers who exceed the point totals in the Driver Qualification Criteria found in Appendix A.

The HR Department or a designated supervisor in each office or department will, when records are available, review all written and photographic information that is relevant to an accident and review the driving records of the employee(s) involved in an accident for the preceding 36 months.

Next, there will be a review of the Driver Qualification Criteria and a levy of any corrective action based on the information gathered. Departments shall document their findings, and place a copy of the findings in the department's personnel file. A change in an employee's point system shall be given to the HR Department to update the County Driver Qualification listing for insurance purposes.

An at-fault fleet incident/crash within the last three years will revoke an employee's excellent driving status and is grounds for corrective action. Depending on the circumstances surrounding each fleet incident/crash, the following corrective actions are possible:

Oral Counseling	Driver training	Driver education	Written reprimand
Suspension	Probation	Termination	

A conviction for one of the following violations, barring appeal, will permanently disqualify a driver from being considered for positions that require operation of county-owned or leased vehicles or equipment:

1. Driving under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance
2. Refusing to submit to a test to determine alcohol or controlled substance concentration
3. Leaving the scene of a crash
4. Vehicular manslaughter/homicide
5. Using vehicle to commit a felony
6. Losing your license or driving while license is suspended

Drivers with 12 points or more in the last three (3) years will be removed from positions requiring operation of county-owned or leased vehicles or equipment. Drivers removed from positions requiring driving may be reassigned according to specific department policies if they qualify for currently available positions that do not require driving. If they do not qualify for a current position that does not require driving, they may be terminated. In case of an arrest for a violation listed above, the official or department head may, based on business necessity, take appropriate action, up to and including dismissal from employment.

## **Right of Appeal—After September 26, 2006**

With the approval of the elected official or department head, a person hired by the County on or after September 27, 2006 or an applicant for a county position to be filled on or after that date, may appeal a disqualification not based on items 3,4, or 5, above, if the employee or applicant has not been arrested or charged with a violation carrying a point factor rating of 4 or higher (see Appendix A) in the 36-month period preceding the date of the appeal hearing. The County Fleet Committee may, at its discretion, after due consideration of the County's best interests and the recommendation of the official or department head, consider lifting the disqualification or restricting the employee or applicant's vehicle or equipment operation in lieu of permanent disqualification.



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## **Post Fleet Incident/Crash Training**

Drivers with violations, fleet incidents and/or crashes may be required to complete safety or fleet safety program training.

## **Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) Checks**

Motor vehicle record checks for drivers or operators of county-owned or leased vehicles and equipment will be performed annually by the automobile insurance company. Departments may also request a MVR check at any time on any employee who operates a county-owned or leased vehicle or equipment. The HR Department will review vehicle record reports and make appropriate recommendations.

Offices and departments will require new hires who will be assigned to operate county-owned or leased vehicles and equipment to provide a copy of their MVR to the department, and the MVR will be taken into account in making hiring decisions.

Drivers of county-owned or leased vehicles or equipment must notify their supervisor when any on or off the job changes in the following occur:

- Citations for driving-(moving violation) related offenses
- Citation for No Liability Insurance
- Loss of drivers license
- Convictions for driving-(moving violation) related offenses
- Changes in the ability to operate a motor vehicle due to injury or illness that impacts safe operation of the vehicle

A copy of this notification will be given to the HR Department to update the County Driver Qualification listing for insurance purposes.

## **Driver Training**

It is recommended that every employee who will operate a county-owned or leased vehicle or equipment be trained in safe operation through their department.

## **Program Acknowledgement**

Drivers will read and sign the Vehicle Management & Use Acknowledgement Form upon receiving a county-owned or leased vehicle or being assigned to operate county-owned or leased equipment. Drivers will return the signed form to the Human Resources Department as part of New Hire Orientation processes.



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual

## II. Personal Vehicles Used on Williamson County Business

### **Safe Vehicle Operation**

Drivers operating personal vehicles used on county business and drivers operating other non-county vehicles on county business will operate the vehicles in a safe and lawful manner and do what is reasonably expected to avoid crashes and injuries to passengers.

### **Insurance limits:**

Every vehicle used on county business must have liability coverage at least at the minimum levels required by state law.

### **Verification of coverage:**

Employees operating their own vehicles on county business must be able to provide proof of insurance in case of a traffic violation or crash. State inspection sticker must be up-to-date and displayed properly on the vehicle.

### **MVR criteria:**

Employees may be required to meet the same MVR criteria as county-owned vehicle drivers as outlined in Appendix A of the program.

### **Seat belts:**

Drivers should ensure that all occupants of the vehicle wear seat belts at all times when possible, when the vehicle is in use. Business passengers should not travel in vehicles that are not equipped with restraints in areas of the vehicle intended for cargo or where seats with restraints are not available.

### **Fleet safety policies:**

Employees using personal vehicles on county business may be required to comply with all of the policies as outlined in the Vehicle Use Section. (Employees using personal vehicles on county business whose driving records, upon review, show violations listed in Appendix A, may be subject to the disciplinary actions listed in Appendix A.)

### **Program Acknowledgement**

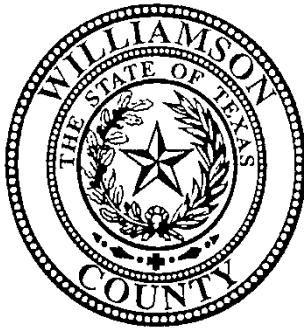
Drivers will read and sign the Vehicle Management & Use Policy upon being authorized to operate a personal vehicle on county business. Drivers will return the signed form to the Human Resources Department as part of New Hire Orientation processes.



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## Appendix H Fleet Management Program Policy (Fleet Committee)



**WILLIAMSON COUNTY  
FLEET SERVICES  
3151 S.E. INNERLOOP  
GEORGETOWN, TEXAS 78626  
PHONE (512) 943-3349  
FAX (512) 943-3398**

### **FLEET MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

#### **SECTION I**

The County's vehicles and equipment are critical components in providing efficient and effective services to the residents of Williamson County. Our goal is to make certain that the vehicles/equipment are the right ones for the job and are acquired at the lowest cost possible, maintained properly and efficiently as possible and ultimately sold for the highest dollar available.

#### **SUMMARY**

- A.** Define management of county vehicles assigned to drivers that meet criteria outlined in the Vehicle Use Section.
- B.** Establish policy and procedures designed to prolong vehicle/equipment life while minimizing costs.
- C.** Establishes a County Fleet Committee (CFC) in accordance with County Budget Order.
- D.** Centralizes fleet accountability and control under the direction and guidance of the CFC.
- E.** Establishes and defines functional responsibilities.
- F.** Defines:
  - 1. Rolling stock.
  - 2. Unit of Equipment
  - 3. User department
  - 4. Under utilization
  - 5. Types of County Vehicles
- G.** Section II outlines Fleet Services' responsibilities.

#### **POLICY**

- H.** This policy is applicable to all County departments regardless of funding source. Note: Exceptions can be made by user departments, fleet services, and purchasing on specialized equipment.



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- I. The CFC shall be comprised of the Fleet Director, Commissioner's Court member, Sr. Director of HR and the Budget Officer. The Purchasing Director will be a non-voting member of the Committee.
- J. All fleet management practices will be conducted between user departments and fleet services in accordance with pre-established operational procedures.

## FUNCTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- K. Fleet Services shall be responsible for centralized vehicle and equipment management to include administration, servicing, operations facilities, acquisition, replacement, utilization, cost, and management information.
- L. User departments are responsible for insuring assigned equipment is maintained in a safe and efficient manner at all times; in accordance with County Asset Policy.
- M. The Director of Purchasing is responsible for disposing of rolling stock equipment in accordance with County Asset Policy.

## DEFINITIONS

- N. Rolling stock – equipment with engines over 20 HP; rolling equipment with a replacement value exceeding \$5,000 and trailers with a gross load capacity exceeding 1500 pounds.
- O. Unit of equipment – equipment assigned a Six position alpha numeric Fleet Services control number and listed on the county's equipment inventory listing, the maintenance of which is principally performed by Fleet Services.
- P. User department – a County department which utilizes and has responsibility for managing rolling stock assets and certain other equipment for which maintenance and repairs are performed by Fleet Service.
- Q. Under Utilized – As a general guideline, any vehicle that is driven less than 7,000 miles/year. Exceptions to this guideline include: specially equipped vehicles that serve a vital function but are used more for accomplishing an assigned task rather than for transportation needs and vehicles located at remote locations.
- R. -County-Owned Vehicle shall mean any motor-driven vehicle which: 1) Either has or, in accordance with County Policies, Procedures, and Regulations, should have its title registered in the name of Williamson County and is licensed for use on public roads and 2) Is designed primarily to transport people, rather than to transport cargo or to perform some mechanical function, such as excavation or road grading. Pick-up trucks shall be presumed to be designed primarily to transport people. Such vehicles will be defined in the following categories:
  - 1. Primary Patrol Vehicle – Vehicles used for patrol and traffic enforcement in the Sheriff's Department only. This vehicle will be equipped with a patrol package including light bars, siren with speaker, grill guard, and all the electronics and radio equipment necessary for protection and safety. Primary patrol supervisor units are considered a primary patrol vehicle. These vehicles are replaceable vehicles.
  - 2. Primary Vehicles – Vehicles which have been approved by Commissioner's Court to perform necessary duties by a department and are not Primary Patrol vehicles or an Auxiliary vehicle. These vehicles are replaceable vehicles.



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual

3. Auxiliary Vehicles – Vehicles that have already been replaced but Fleet Services has determined still has a useful life. Other vehicles that are considered to be auxiliary vehicles could include donated vehicles, surplus vehicles, grant vehicles or other out of the ordinary purchases. These vehicles are not replaceable vehicles.
4. Turn-In Vehicle – Vehicle that has been replaced or is no longer needed by the department shall be turned in to Fleet Services.
5. Surplus Vehicle – Vehicle which has been deemed unusable by the county. These vehicles will be in the control of the Fixed Asset Manager and disposed of in accordance with county policy.

## **SECTION II**

### **FLEET MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES**

#### **BUDGET**

- A. Fleet Services shall operate as a cost center utilizing an internally funded budget.

#### **EQUIPMENT USE PARAMETERS:**

- B. Life parameters for each class of equipment will be recommended by user department(s) and Fleet Services. The CFC will have final authority.
- C. Units meeting pre-established replacement criteria will be evaluated by Fleet Services in partnership with the user department to determine if replacement is necessary or if life extension, i.e. rebuild, would be more cost effective.

#### **EQUIPMENT UTILIZATION:**

- D. Fleet Services will annually identify and submit to CFC and user Department(s) a listing of vehicles and equipment classified as being under utilized. User department(s) desiring to retain vehicles and/or specific equipment must submit justification through established criteria developed by the CFC. CFC shall determine retention status, i.e. retain in assigned department, reassign to another department, or use for some other organizational purpose.

#### **EQUIPMENT STANDARDIZATION:**

- E. To facilitate standardization of Fleet composition for cost savings and overall maintenance; each fiscal year user departments will submit recommendations for what will constitute a primary vehicle and/or auxiliary vehicle as applicable. Recommendations should include but are not limited to: standard equipment, specifications, and any reasonable additional costs the county can expect to incur for the purchase and make ready of requested equipment prior to being placed into service. The CFC will review recommendations during the budget process to assess the most reasonable and cost effective options for the county.



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## EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT:

- F.** Fleet Services at Budget time of each year shall submit to the user department Directors a list of vehicles and equipment recommended for replacement. Department directors shall then have ten (10) working days to concur and/or submit supporting data for recommending otherwise. Fleet Services will have five (5) working days to reconsider or maintain initial recommendation. CFC will review the overall list and any non-concurrence issues. Approved list will be submitted to the Risk Coordinator to reconcile with county insurance records.
- G.** The listing will include the suggested replacement standard for each unit; whether a unit should be replaced by a similar unit or by a different type; i.e. a larger truck chassis; a van for a car or pickup, etc.
- H.** Departments desiring deviations to the recommended replacement listing or suggested replacement standard shall submit a written request to the County Judge office through Fleet Services. The request shall include specific, detailed analysis supporting the requested change. CFC will review the overall list and any non-concurrence issues.
- I.** Requests for replacements not recommended by Fleet Services must be reviewed for justification and approved by the County Judge.
- J.** Fleet Services shall provide the County Judge and user departments with a list of each department's equipment, which qualifies for replacement by the second Monday in April annually.
- K.** Equipment replacement will be based on a priority list of equipment; as determined by CFC and user departments. The finalized list will be submitted to the Commissioners Court for budget evaluation.
- L.** Request for adding additional vehicles/equipment to the Fleet should be submitted in writing explaining why additional vehicles are needed. These requests should be reviewed by the CFC for their approval before going to court. The requests for vehicles that are received outside the budget process will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Wherever possible, a loaner/auxiliary vehicle will be utilized to address immediate needs until a more permanent budget solution can be reached. Funds for any differences (i.e. increase) in cost attributable to replacement of a unit with an upgraded unit, as requested by user department – should come from departmental operating budgets.
- M.** Request for rolling stock equipment which occur outside of the budget process, such as a replacement for a total loss accident, must be requested by the Department Head or Elected official concerned and submitted for approval to the County Judge.
- N.** Acquisition of equipment should be obtained by straight purchase. Any other method of acquisition, i.e. lease purchase, must be reviewed and approved by the County Judge and Purchasing.

## PURCHASING PROCEDURES

- O.** Departments shall complete a vehicle/equipment request form on each new rolling stock item the department was authorized to purchase. The request shall be submitted to the Purchasing Department of the Auditor's Office.



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- P. Fleet Services, in partnership with User Departments shall be responsible for developing specifications for all new or replacement type equipment.
  - 1. Specifications for cars, pickups, and other light/medium duty trucks shall be in accordance with the standard requirements as established by the State of Texas or other federal agency.
  - 2. Specifications for large trucks and specialized equipment will be developed by Fleet Management in partnership with the respective department(s). Department(s) are responsible for providing non-proprietary specification data on desired equipment.
  - 3. Specifications will include requirements relating to prototypes, inspection, training, testing, warranty, etc.
  - 4. Completed specifications will be sent to the user department(s) for approval. Specifications requiring corrections or additions are to be returned to Fleet Management for action. Specifications requiring no corrections, additions, or changes, and are approved for purchase, are to be forwarded directly to the Purchasing Department.
- Q. Fleet Services in partnership with user departments shall be responsible for reviewing all bids upon official bid opening to insure that the lowest and best responsible bid conforms to the intent of specifications. Fleet Services will forward an analysis of the bid responses to the user department and to the Purchasing Office along with a recommendation regarding bid award and purchase.
- R. All new equipment, along with accompanying documentation, shall be delivered to Fleet Services for acceptance inspection, assignment of Six position alpha numeric Fleet Service Control number, and made ready for service. Equipment shall not be removed by or released to the departments prior to completion of these services.

## ANNUAL BUDGET

- S. Operating budgets are to include funds for requested additions to the fleet.
- T. Request to replace equipment which occur outside of the budget process, i.e. total loss due to accident will follow standard purchasing procedures as explained in paragraph L above.
- U. Cost attributable to upgrading equipment shall be included in departmental Budgets.

## REPLACED EQUIPMENT

- V. Departments receiving new vehicle/equipment replacements shall, upon placing the new unit into service, submit the completed and signed Vehicle Status Change form and the old unit to Fleet Services within 30 days. In the event a department is unable to comply with the 30 day policy, the department may **request** a -waiver from the CFC, stating the justification for the delay. The unit being turned in shall be cleaned, detailed and made ready for immediate sale.



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## **SECTION III POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **A. User Department shall be defined by Number and Name**

Example #405 Veteran Services

### **B. Each Department shall have a person for a point of contact**

1. Contact name, phone number and e-mail
2. Contact person shall receive and respond to all fleet issues concerning their department.

### **C. Preventive Maintenance Program**

1. Preventive Maintenance shall be performed as required by the Manufacturer.
2. Weekly notices of units requiring service shall be sent to the contact person.

### **D. Fueling of vehicles and equipment**

1. County vehicles shall be fueled from approved automated fuel sites.
2. The fuel cards shall be issued to the vehicle, the employee shall enter their PIN # and the correct mileage. This mileage entry is the basis of the utilization and replacement reports as well as the Preventive Maintenance Schedule.
3. The contact person shall supply Fleet Services with the new employee information so the PIN# can be put into the system.
4. When an employee becomes detached from County employment, the contact person shall inform Fleet Services so that the employee and PIN# can be removed.

### **E. Accident reports on vehicles and equipment**

Damage to a vehicle or piece of equipment that is not part of the normal wear and tear shall be reported as defined in the Vehicle Use Section. A copy of the accident or incident report shall also be reported to Fleet Services so that damage cost and out of service timeframe can be assessed.

### **F. Monthly billing reports to each user Department**

Each user department receiving services and or fuel from Fleet Services will be billed for those cost on the first week of each month.

### **G. Procedures for maintenance and repair of vehicles and equipment**

#### **Appointments**

1. Please feel free to call in advance to schedule an appointment at 943-3349
2. Drive ins will be serviced in a first come first serve basis.
3. Before you come in: Please be aware that we do not have loaner or rental vehicles.
4. Vehicle Drop Off: Write down the odometer or hour meter reading and the unit number. Bring keys and information to the shop office and someone there will assist you.
5. Please do not make the request to the Repair Technicians.
6. Give reason for appointment and explain any problems you have noticed with the unit.
7. Leave your name and phone number where you can be reached.
8. The parts room is a restricted area. Unauthorized personnel are not allowed in the parts room.



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## **H. After Hours Drop Off**

1. For after hours drop off, complete a repair form.
2. Leave unit parked on the north side of the body shop.
3. Place keys and form in the Fleet Services night drop box (red box mounted on north wall of the paint and body/rig out shop).

## **I. The Fleet Services Department Office**

1. Will tell you approximate time your vehicle should be ready.
2. You may call 943-3349 to check on the status of your unit.
3. Shop hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

## **J. Vehicle Pick Up**

1. Your vehicle will be parked in the south side parking lot behind the fence.
2. Key may be picked up in the green box mounted on the wall on the south side of the paint and body/rig out shop.

## **K. Retirement of vehicles and equipment**

A Vehicle Status Change Form (VSCF) must be filled out on any unit that will be leaving the users department.

The VSC form has the departure path, auction, trade-in or transfer to another department. The VSC form will be signed by the elected official or department head and Fleet Director. The form will be sent to the Auditors Office by Fleet Services. The owning department has (30) days to turn in the vehicle to Fleet services or request a waiver as per item V in Section II of this document. The Auditors will put the unit or units on the court agenda for approval. When the vehicles/equipment has been traded or sold these units will be again listed with their recovered dollar amounts on the court agenda for the Record.

## **L. Vehicles and equipment for Salvage**

If a vehicle or piece of equipment is going to be used for salvage a VSC form will be filled out and signed by the Department Head or Elected Official and Fleet Director and sent to the Auditor.

Salvage parts will not be removed from any vehicle that has not been declared for salvage.

Removing parts from a whole vehicle greatly reduces the sale value.

## **SECTION IV**

### **Vehicle and Equipment Idling Policy**

No employee shall cause or allow a motor vehicle engine or other engine within his or her custody or control to idle for more than five consecutive minutes when the motor vehicle is not in motion or when the other engine is not being used for its primary function.

No employee shall switch the motor vehicle or other engine off and back on in a manner that would serve to satisfy the five-minute limitation, but defeat the intent of this policy, which is to reduce emissions, fuel consumption, and vehicle motor and other engine wear caused by engine idling.



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## Definitions

**Idle** – The operation of an engine in the operating mode where the engine is not engaged in gear, where the engine operates at a speed at the revolutions per minute specified by the engine or vehicle manufacturer for when the accelerator is fully released, and there is no load on the engine.

**Motor vehicle** – Any self-propelled device powered by an internal combustion engine and designed to operate with four or more wheels in contact with the ground, in or by which a person or property is or may be transported.

**Other engine** – A gasoline, diesel, propane, CNG, or other petroleum-fuel based vehicle with an internal combustion engine, that is not a motor vehicle as defined above, but which is mobile and is utilized in construction, earth-moving, materials management, transportation or grounds-keeping type operations.

### Exceptions:

1. The motor vehicle is prohibited from movement due to traffic conditions over which the operator has no control.
2. The motor vehicle or other engine is being used in an emergency or law enforcement capacity.
3. The engine is being operated solely to defrost a windshield.
4. The motor vehicle or other engine being used as a primary power source for another device such as a power take-off (PTO) unit.
5. The motor vehicle or other engine is being operated for maintenance or diagnostic purposes.
6. The motor vehicle is idling to operate the air conditioning or heating system for employee health or safety.





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## **EQUIPMENT DEPRECIATION REPLACEMENT CYCLE**

There is frequently a significant lag period between when a vehicle is tagged for replacement and when the vehicle is actually replaced. The following criteria are recommendations for when vehicles should be –tagged (reviewed) for replacement to ensure that a properly functioning fleet is always available to carry out the County's various objectives. Vehicles with maintenance and/or repair costs greater than 50% of the original purchase price shall also be reviewed during the replacement cycle.

TYPE-DESCRIPTION	RECOMMENDED REPLACEMENT STANDARD
<b>AUTOMOBILES:</b>	
Primary Vehicles.....	7 years or 85,000 miles
Primary patrol sedans.....	3 years or 75,000 miles
<b>PICKUPS &amp; VANS:</b>	
Light duty (Class 1 & 2 – to 10,000 GVW).....	7 years or 105,000 miles
Front Line Ambulance.....	2 years or 67,000 miles
<b>TRUCKS:</b>	
Light duty, gas (Class 3 & 4 – to 16,000 GVW).....	9 years or 100,000 miles
Light duty, diesel (Class 3 & 4 – to 16,000 GVW).....	9 years or 160,000 miles
Med. Duty (Class 5, 6 & 7 – to 35,000 GVW).....	9 years or 180,000 miles
Heavy duty (Class 8 – over 35,000 GVW).....	9 years or 250,000 miles
<b>CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT:</b>	
Motor Graders, Track Loaders, Track Excavators, Gradall Excavators, & Dozers.....	10 years or 10,000 hours
Backhoe Loaders.....	14 years or 10,000 hours
Wheel Loaders.....	15 years or 7,500 hours
Compaction Rollers.....	15 years or 7,500 hours
<b>PAVING EQUIPMENT:</b>	
Asphalt Distributors.....	14 years or 100,000 miles
Asphalt Pavers.....	10 years or 7,500 hours
Chip spreaders.....	14 years or 7,500 hours
Road Brooms.....	14 years or 7,500 hours
Truck mounted sweeper.....	10 years or 100,000 miles
<b>MOWING EQUIPMENT:</b>	
Mowing Tractors.....	10 years or 5,500 hours
Boom Mowers.....	14 years or 5,500 hours
Batwing Mowers.....	10 years
Riding Mowers.....	10 years
<b>TRAILERS:</b>	
Gross load capacity or 4,500 lbs. or greater.....	15 years
<b>MISCELLANEOUS POWER EQUIPMENT:</b>	
Water pumps, Welding machines, Concrete saws, Forklifts, etc.....	15 years



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## Appendix A

### Driver Qualification Criteria

**All preventable fleet incidents/crashes within a 36-month period shall be subject to the following disciplinary action:**

**Employees will be categorized based on a point system developed from the County's Point Assessment Table. Drivers are categorized based on their point summation from the table within a 36-month period. (See also Section II for applicability of these criteria to employees operating their personal vehicles.)**

Excellent	0 points	Receive recognition.
Satisfactory	1-4 points	Receive corrective action.
Unsatisfactory	5-11 points	Receive continued corrective action, and may include some type of driver improvement training.
Excluded drivers	12 + points	Driver will not drive a county-owned or leased vehicle or equipment, or use a personal vehicle for county business. Drivers removed from positions requiring driving may be reassigned according to specific department policies if they qualify for currently available positions that do not require driving. If they do not qualify for a current position that does not require driving, they may be terminated.

### TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES AUTO LIABILITY POINT SYSTEM FOR EXCLUSION OF DRIVERS

Excluded driver would have 12 or more points

Warned driver would have 8-11 points

The following is a schedule of the points as assessed for specified violations:

6 points (within the past 36 months)

- Hit and run
- Leaving the scene of an accident
- Negligent homicide
- Driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Unlawful use of driver's license



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- Driving while license is suspended

4 points (within the past 36 months)

- At fault accidents
- Driving on the wrong side of the road
- Driving in wrong lane
- Turn from wrong lane
- Failure to control vehicle
- Illegal passing

3 points (within the past 36 months)

- Speeding and all other minor moving violations (to include all other scheduled violations)

Automatic Exclusion for Vehicular Manslaughter or  
Vehicular Homicide

All facts and circumstances surrounding the fleet incident/crash shall be reviewed prior to any corrective action being levied. Fleet incidents, as in those with no property damage or minimal costs, can have their point assessment adjusted down by up to two points only after reviewing the facts. The above point system is the minimum criteria for assignment of points and is not all-inclusive. Each individual department may add to the above point system, but may not replace or remove any of the above criteria.

**NOTE:** If the Fleet Committee determines that the specific circumstances associated with any violation, or combination of violations, listed above, demonstrate a pattern of abuse or a clear disregard for safety or property, the Committee may recommend immediate dismissal of the employee.



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual



## Appendix I **Public Communications Policy (Public Information Office)**

### **Public Communications Policy**

1. Purpose: The purpose of the Williamson County Public Communication policy is to establish guidelines to ensure that information disseminated by the County to residents, employees, news media representatives and others in either verbal or printed form is consistent and professionally presented, in both emergency and non-emergency situations.
2. Philosophy: Williamson County embraces an open government philosophy.
3. Responsibility: When communicating with the public in either verbal or written form, each County official and employee shall respond in a professional and timely manner always as mindful of the best interest of the County. In this context, personal opinions and speculation are inappropriate and shall be avoided.

### Verbal Communications

Public: When information is requested by a non-media member of the public, each employee shall respond in a professional, concise and timely manner – generally within the same business day - within his or her area of job responsibility and knowledge.

Each employee shall notify his/her supervisor when a potential communication problem or misunderstanding may develop and what action might mitigate the situation before it becomes a problem.

Media: When information is requested by a member of the news media:

1. All employees may speak, but are not obligated to speak, directly with members of the media when asked about routine and general public information where they have specific job related knowledge and will refer all other requests to their department head. In this context, personal opinions and speculation are inappropriate and shall be avoided. Routine and general public information includes department or office locations and phone numbers, staff names, title, public meeting dates, locations.
2. The employee contacted by the news media shall, as soon as practical, notify their department head or elected official as well as the Public Information Office (PIO) giving details of the request including the media organization, name of the reporter, question(s) asked and the response given, if any.
3. For non-routine or general public information requests, the department head or elected official shall either respond directly to the news media or shall contact the public affairs



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manager to discuss any serious, sensitive, controversial or countywide impact requests. The PIO is on-call 24 hours a day to respond to media inquiries. The PIO is available to all employees for advice, consultation and assistance in media relations and can be present for any arranged interviews with reporters when requested. When in doubt, the employee should defer to the PIO.

## Printed Communications

News Releases: The Public Information Office (PIO) is the only department that provides news media releases about County events, initiatives and services for County departments. The Sheriff's Office, District Attorney and County Attorney disseminate their own information to the news media.

County Logos : Only County offices and departments may use the County logo and County seal. The logo and seal may not be used by other entities or persons for marketing, indications of affiliation, or other purposes. The Williamson County logo is an important part of the professionalism and history of Williamson County. As one of the fastest growing counties in the State of Texas, a brand for Williamson County is a necessary step in creating an identity for the County. The brand should be protected to strengthen presence and increase awareness within the minds of the employees of Williamson County, as well as the residents. Please refer to the logo design guidelines for specifics on usage.

Printed Materials: To ensure consistency of branding and professional appearance, all printed publications for County departments should be submitted to the Public Information Office for review prior to publication. This includes brochures, flyers, guides, etc. This does not include routine forms, reports to other agencies, the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), the Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR), the Annual Operating Budget or routine updates to web page content.

Web Sites: The Williamson County Web Site is comprised of various Web pages operated by Williamson County. The Williamson County Web Site is available for the purpose of disseminating County information for County offices and departments in accordance with the Web Site user agreement. County Web pages will have uniform consistency in design to support the County brand and image of professionalism. Viewers must be able to tell that they are on a Williamson County Web page by its appearance and common location of information. To ensure consistency and professionalism, all non-routine Web page changes to content or design must be submitted to the Public Information Office for review prior to implementation.

Social Media Sites: Social media sites for County departments and offices, like County Web pages, will be available for the purpose of disseminating County information and providing an opportunity to engage with the public. Social media sites are online communications tools that allow the general public to post, comment on or share content. Employees who post on these sites in their job capacities are subject to the Public Communication Policy. Thus, a professional demeanor, in the best interest of the County is mandated. Again, in this context,



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personal opinions and speculation are inappropriate and must be avoided. County Social Media sites are not for the personal use of the County employees. Social Media sites include, but are not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, etc. Social media sites for County departments or offices must be approved by the Public Communication Committee comprised of individuals from Public Information and Technology Services Department before being formed. Refer to the Social Media Sites Policy for additional information.

## Requests for Information

**Public Information Act/Open Records Act Requests:** Public Information Act requests or Open Records Requests must be in writing and shall be immediately forwarded either to the elected official who is the official record keeper for the office or the public affairs manager for departments that report to the Commissioners Court. The information must be collected by the office or department that is the official record holder of the information. Any requests where an exception to disclosure will be sought should be promptly forwarded to the County Attorney's Office to prepare the brief for the Attorney General's Office. Any information that is not confidential by law or where an exception to disclosure has not been sought will be released in accordance with the Public Information Act.



# Williamson County Employee Policy Manual

## Appendix J

### **Fiscal Policies Administered by the County Auditor's Office**

Williamson County adheres to employee related fiscal policies which are administered by the County Auditor's Office. Employee related operational expenses include tuition reimbursement, off-site staff development, travel while on County business, seminars/conferences, meals, lodging, car rental, personal car usage, other expenses, uniforms, employee recognition and non-reimbursable expenses.

#### **Tuition Reimbursement**

The County may pay for tuition, related to obtaining career certification or a degree directly relevant to County business, as defined by the office or department involved, and pre-approved by the County Auditor for full time employees. The training/class/ work must provide you with skills and/or knowledge that is directly related to your job description. A copy of your job description and the course/certification description should be submitted with the approval request. The funds for these items must be available in the appropriate department's training budget. If approved, the County will reimburse only the actual number of credits per each course up to a total of 6 credit hours per fiscal year. After completing the course(s)/testing and achieving minimum established grades (C for undergraduate and B for graduate), employees may apply for reimbursement of 100% tuition or testing fees not to exceed that which would be payable at a state supported college or university located within a 50 mile radius of Williamson County or a fully accredited online college or university.

#### **Reimbursement/Payment for Training/Certification/Licensing & Exam Expenses**

If the County requires an employee to attend a training/certification program directly related to their job description, the County may pay for the full or partial cost of the program including any training materials, exam or licensing fees. If the County pays for any portion of the class/training program and other fees, the employee must complete the requirements of the program including passing any exams required or the employee may be required to reimburse the County.

Recertification of any required job related certifications may be paid for by the County and are limited to two times for each renewal period. The employee will be responsible for paying any further recertification costs if unsuccessful on the first two attempts and the employee will not be reimbursed. Employees must have written approval from the Department Head/Elected Official for all second attempts for recertification.

#### **Off Site Staff Development**

Off-site staff development is a period away from normal activities for study and instruction under a professional trainer. This provides a forum to discuss issues and ideas that will aid in running your department and promote team-building.

- Off-site staff development is limited to once a year, per division
- The total cost for off-site staff development should not exceed (per employee) the normal and/or customary cost for individual employee training expenses and daily meal reimbursement
- A list of attendees must be submitted for documentation as required by IRS Publication #463

#### **Travel While on County Business**

- You are responsible for all excess cost and additional travel expenses resulting from taking an indirect route or a delayed return trip for personal preference or convenience
- Airfare may be charged to the County's air travel account that has been established with Accent Travel
- Airfare reimbursement will be paid directly to the travel agency, airlines, or your County travel card. (i.e.: JP Morgan)
- If you pay for your own airfare tickets, you will be reimbursed when you return from your business trip.



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- Air travel expenses must be supported with the receipt from your airline ticket or an itinerary. If tickets are purchased through a web site and do not issue paper tickets, submit a copy of the web page showing the travel price
- Cancellation penalties may be levied by airlines when a ticket cannot be used. The County could reimburse you for this cost if the change in travel plan was due to a business-related change or a personal emergency. Documentation for the change must be submitted to the County Judge for consideration of payment and is subject to review by the County Auditor per Local Government Code 113.064
- Should an airline delay necessitate an overnight stay, you must first attempt to secure complimentary lodging from the airline. If unsuccessful, obtain lodging at the most reasonable available rates and the County will reimburse this expense. Documentation for the delay must be submitted and approved.
- The County will not reimburse you for tickets purchased with frequent flyer miles
- You will not be paid in advance for a travel expenditure. If you pay for an expense in advance, reimbursement will not be made until after the trip is taken
- Reimbursement for transportation costs will be at the most reasonable means of transport

**Example:** *airline costs will only be reimbursed at coach rate*

- The County will not reimburse airfare prices if they are higher than the cost of mileage reimbursement. County employees may use Accent Travel to charge airfare purchases to the County's air travel account.
- Additional expenses associated with extended travel (such as a Saturday night stay) may be reimbursed when the cost of airfare would be less than the cost of additional expenses (lodging, meals) if the trip had not been extended. Documentation will be required to justify the expense
- All expense reimbursement requests must include the following:
  - Date
  - Destination
  - Purpose
  - Name of traveler(s)
  - Conference/seminar agenda or correspondence that verifies the business purpose of the expense
- Each expense reimbursement must have your signature and the department head approval. The person approving an expense reimbursement should verify the correct budget line item is being charged.
- A secondary authorization signature on a reimbursement is required if you are not an elected official
- All expense reimbursements must be received in the Auditor's office no more than 60 days after the incurrence of the expense. Any items over the 60 days will be denied reimbursement; however, the County Judge has the authority to approve requests over 60 days old
- The County will not reimburse travel expenses incurred by a spouse or other individual accompanying you on business
- All expenses except mileage and meals must have a paid receipt. If a receipt cannot be obtained, a written statement of your expenses may be substituted
- "Traveling expenses" incurred "while away from home" which are deductible under Section 162 (a) (2) of the Internal Revenue Code include the cost of meals only if the trip requires sleep or rest. All meals not associated with an overnight stay are taxable to you
- All credit card bills paid through Accounts Payable (i.e. JP Morgan) must have detailed receipts attached, excluding meal receipts. Meals for day travel should NOT be charged on a County credit card. County credit card statements must be approved by someone other than the card holder, unless the card holder is an elected official
- Sales tax on goods purchased will not be reimbursed. Sales tax for meals, airline tickets, and hotel stays are the only taxes that will be reimbursed. The *sales tax exemption form* is available in the Performance Center
- If you lose a required receipt, seek a duplicate. When an acceptable duplicate is unobtainable, you should submit a signed affidavit itemizing the expenditure with the expense report
- The County will not pay for any late charges incurred on County credit cards. It is the card holder's obligation to make sure the bill is submitted in a timely manner
- The County will hold you responsible for finance charges and/or late payments due on invoices or credit card payments that are turned in to Accounts Payable late or because the department budget did not have enough funds to process the payment in a timely manner



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- You are responsible for repayment of inappropriately reimbursed expenses whenever an audit or subsequent review of the travel expense reimbursement documentation finds you were reimbursed contrary to these guidelines
- Any personal expense should be reimbursed to the County. Please attach your check, made payable to Williamson County, for these charges with your expense reimbursement
- Expenses incurred due to you or an elected official serving on a board or committee of an association related to your County employment will only be reimbursed to the extent that the association does not reimburse you. You need to provide documentation of your request for reimbursement from the association and the association's denial of the request

## Seminars/Conferences

- All training should be obtained at the closest possible location. Out of state training is discouraged when local training is available.
- If you are registered to attend a training opportunity and are subsequently not able to attend, a County substitute should attend in your place or a refund requested.
- Only job related training that is registered in the name of Williamson County will be processed for payment.
- A copy of a check in lieu of a paid receipt may be used as the receipt for registration fee reimbursement.
- The check must be made payable to the seminar/conference and a copy of the check is required. In addition, a brochure or similar document of the conference indicating the amount of registration fee and the conference agenda must accompany the copy of the check, supporting the reimbursement claim.
- You can request payment directly to the seminar/conference by submitting a check requisition form to the Accounts Payable Department with proper backup documentation. Please note that a check request will take 13-20 days to process once it is received by the Accounts Payable Department.
- You will not be reimbursed for registration fees until after the conference or training date.

## Meals

- Reimbursement for meal costs in travel of less than one day is provided solely to offset actual expenses where restaurant meal costs are incurred
- Each employee is on their honor to request reimbursement for actual expenses incurred
- The reimbursement for meal costs in travel of less than one day will be reimbursed on the employee's paycheck and will be processed as taxable income. This taxable income will also be reflected on your annual W-2.
- Meals are reimbursable only for County business trips that are outside the County. Exceptions may be made for Commissioners' Court meetings that extend beyond 1:00 p.m. and off-site staff development opportunities that are held within the County
- Meal reimbursements are limited to a maximum of \$40.00 per day. You may claim up to \$20.00 for meals when traveling outside the County for day trips. You may claim up to \$40.00 for meals when traveling outside the County and an overnight stay is necessary, or when your work hours extend at least three hours beyond your normal scheduled workday. You will be required to provide documentation of extended work hours
- If an overnight stay is required, but the stay does not exceed a 50-mile radius outside the County, you may claim an amount up to the \$40.00 overnight allowance for your meals, but lodging will not be reimbursed
- Meal receipts are not required unless requested by your supervisor or department head, or the meal is charged on a County credit card. Meal receipts that are turned in to Accounts Payable will be reimbursed for the actual meal costs
- Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursed
- You should only request reimbursement for your own expenses. If you request reimbursement for a day travel meal for another employee, the full reimbursement amount requested will be shown as taxable income to you on your W-2.
- Tips should be reasonable and should be included in the \$20.00 or \$40.00 meal allowance
- If your duties take you to alternate work locations within the County, you are not reimbursed a lunch meal. It is the employee's own responsibility to make provisions for lunches.
- Meals purchased for entertainment/business purposes are not allowed



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- Meal reimbursements are paid for County employees only

## Lodging

- Lodging expenses are reimbursed only if you are traveling beyond a 50-mile radius of Williamson County. (This means 50 miles beyond the County line. Lodging in Austin will not be reimbursed.)
- Hotel accommodations require an original itemized hotel folio as a receipt. The lodging receipt should include the name of the motel/hotel, number of occupants, and the goods or services for each individual charge such as room rental, food, tax, etc. Credit card receipts by themselves are not acceptable
- You will only be reimbursed for a single room rate charge plus any applicable tax. If a single room is not available, you must provide documentation to justify the expense. You may also be required to provide additional documentation if the room rate appears to be excessive
- When lodging is shared by two or more employees, the names of the authorized travelers should be noted on the receipt
- Review your room invoice carefully upon checking out
- Personal telephone charges, whether local or long distance, are not reimbursed. If you incur telephone charges that are County-related, please identify them on your hotel receipt
- Government rates, when available should be requested at all times

## Car Rental

- Travelers may rent a car at their destination when:
  - It is less expensive than other transportation modes such as taxis, airport shuttles or public transportation.
  - Cars rented should be economy or mid-size. Luxury vehicle rentals will not be reimbursed
- Renting cars for travel within the County is prohibited except during an election cycle (early voting and Election Day) when the Elections Department needs up to 12 extra automobiles for troubleshooters and runners that provide time-critical technical and procedural support to early voting and Election Day polling locations. You may rent a car to travel to your business destination outside the County, only if the total cost of the rental is less than the mileage reimbursement cost. Check with Accounts Payable for current rates. Documentation showing the cost comparison between the rental cost and mileage may be required
- Many car rental companies charge an exorbitant cost for gasoline if the car is not returned with a full tank. You should avoid such unnecessary charges by returning the car with a full tank
- The rental agreement and the charge card receipt (if applicable) must be turned in with the expense request.
- Insurance purchased when renting a vehicle may also be reimbursed

## Personal Car Usage

- Any County official or employee who is authorized to use their personal vehicle to travel on official County business may be entitled to receive a reimbursement equal to the standard mileage rate allowed by the [IRS](#). Check with the Accounts Payable department for current rates
- Mileage will be reimbursed based on the most common route, including toll roads
- Reimbursement for mileage will not exceed the cost of round trip, coach airfare. You may be required to provide a cost comparison between mileage and airfare
- Reimbursement for mileage is prohibited between place of residence and usual place of work
- Mileage should be calculated from your regular place of work or residence, whichever is the shorter distance when traveling to a meeting, conference, or seminar
- When more than one employee travels in the same vehicle, only one person may claim mileage reimbursement.



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- To be reimbursed for the use of a personal vehicle, travelers must provide the following information on their expense report, per IRS guidelines:
  - The purpose of the trip
  - Date
  - Location traveled to and from
  - Number of miles traveled
- Tolls and parking fees, if reasonable, are reimbursable. Receipts are required for reimbursement. If a receipt is not obtainable, then written documentation of the expense must be submitted for reimbursement
- Toll Tags will be purchased for County vehicles as approved by the County Judge. Some examples of this are for the haul trucks in the Department of Infrastructure and transportation vehicles in Juvenile Services. Contact the County Auditor's Office to assist in setting up these accounts and getting approval from the County Judge. County vehicles with toll tags, and those that are exempt, may access the toll roads for County business only and not for personal commuting
- It is your responsibility to keep track of your own mileage
- The officials and employees who are listed in the section entitled "County Vehicles" are to be provided with a County vehicle in lieu of mileage
- Operating and maintenance expenses, as well as other personal expenses (such as parking tickets, traffic violations, car repairs and collision damage) are not reimbursable
- Officials using personal vehicles on County business will be subject to a Vehicle use Policy adopted by the Commissioners' Court

## Other Expenses

- Taxi fare, bus tickets, conference registrations, parking, etc. must have an original receipt. If a receipt is unobtainable or is lost, a written statement must be submitted for the expense
- Expenses other than meals or mileage require a receipt for reimbursement
- A department may purchase small appliances (i.e.; microwaves, refrigerators) for the convenience of their employees
- Only paid receipts will be reimbursed

## Uniforms

The relevant elected official will issue uniforms for law enforcement and corrections personnel, subject to policies. Uniforms for all other County personnel are subject to the following County-wide policy:

1. You will not be issued a uniform, unless the department head has determined that the wearing of a uniform is a reasonable job requirement. In lieu the department head, the County Judge must make this determination
2. All uniforms will be distinctive and not adaptable for personal use
3. The uniform must be worn at all times while on duty, required by management as a condition of employment. The uniform may also be worn while traveling directly to or from a location where the uniform is required or while on an authorized meal or other break. The uniform may not be worn at any other time
4. All uniforms and other County property must be promptly returned if you leave County employment
5. You will not be issued a uniform unless you have acknowledged this policy in writing
6. Current budgeted funds cannot be expended for uniforms except in compliance with this policy

The Commissioners' Court must approve the funds to be reimbursed for any official, their employee, or the employees or reserve deputies of other departments to receive expense allowances before the expense is incurred.



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## Employee Recognition Expenses

Employee Recognition Expenses should be nominal in nature. You can be taxed for these items. In order to avoid an item being taxable, the following purchases will be allowable for Employee Recognition:

- Plaques, Awards or Certificates of recognition for service, etc.
- Plaques, Awards or Certificates of recognition for retirement
- Plaques, Awards or Certificates of recognition for exemplary job performance

The purchase of gift cards or meals is not allowable as they are taxable items.

Please refer any questions to the Auditor's Office for clarification of your purchases in this area prior to incurring expenses

## Non-Reimbursable Expenses

- The County does not reimburse expenses related to the County Government Week or holiday decorations
- Coffee, tea and other related items used by employees are not reimbursable expenses.
- Mileage to and from County functions (such as the Christmas party or Employee Appreciation luncheon) is not reimbursable
- Other non-reimbursable expenses:
  - a. alcoholic beverages/tobacco products
  - b. personal phone calls
  - c. laundry service
  - d. valet service (if self-parking is an option)
  - e. movie rentals
  - f. damage to personal clothing
  - g. flowers/plants
  - h. greeting cards
  - i. fines and/or penalties
  - j. entertainment, personal clothing, personal sundries, and services
  - k. transportation to places of entertainment or similar personal activities
  - l. up-grades, air, hotel or car rental
  - m. auto repairs
  - n. baby-sitter fees, kennel costs, pet or house-sitting fees
  - o. saunas, massages, or exercise facilities
  - p. credit card delinquency fees
  - q. doctor bills, prescriptions, and other medical services
  - r. lifetime memberships to any association
  - s. early bird check in or priority boarding
  - t. upgraded costs with airline seat selection



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## Appendix K

### **Williamson County Policy for Records Management Requirements for Electronic Mail (proposed 1/13/2009) (Technology Services Department)**

#### **SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION**

This policy applies to e-mail used within the government and e-mail used conjointly with the Internet, and does not supersede any state or federal laws, nor any other government policies regarding confidentiality, information dissemination, or standards of conduct. Generally, e-mail should be used only for legitimate government business; however, brief and occasional e-mail messages of a personal nature may be sent and received if the following conditions are met.

#### **SECTION 2. GENERAL GUIDELINES**

Personal use of e-mail is a privilege, not a right. Abuse of the privilege may result in appropriate disciplinary action. Employees need to keep in mind that all e-mail is recorded and stored along with the source and destination. Management has the ability and right to view employees' e-mail. Recorded e-mail messages are the property of the agency and therefore the taxpayers of the State of Texas. Thus, they are subject to the requirements of the Texas Public Information Act and the laws applicable to State records retention. Employees should be aware that when sending an e-mail message of a personal nature, there is always the danger of the employees' words being interpreted as official government policy or opinion. Therefore, when an employee sends a personal e-mail, especially if the content of the e-mail could be interpreted as an official government statement, the employee should use the following disclaimer at the end of the message:

"This e-mail contains the thoughts and opinions of [*insert employee name*] and does not represent official Williamson County policy."





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If the content of the e-mail contains sensitive or confidential information the employee may use the following message at the end of the message:

"This message contains information which may be confidential and privileged. Unless you are the addressee (or authorized to receive for the addressee), you may not use, copy or disclose to anyone the message or any information contained in the message. If you have received the message in error, please advise the sender by reply e-mail and delete the message."

## **SECTION 3. RESTRICTIONS**

Personal e-mail should not impede the conduct of government business; only incidental amounts of employee time--time periods comparable to reasonable coffee breaks during the day--should be used to attend to personal matters. Racist, sexist, threatening, or otherwise objectionable language is strictly prohibited. E-mail should not be used for any personal monetary interests or gain. Employees should not subscribe to mailing lists or mail services strictly for personal use. Personal e-mail should not cause the government to incur a direct cost in addition to the general overhead of e-mail.

## **SECTION 4. POLICY**

It is the policy of Williamson County to provide for the efficient, economical and effective management of electronic mail records in accordance with Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Title 13, Part 1, Chapter 7, Sections 7.71-7.79 and Local Government Code (LGC), Chapter 205, Sections 205.001-205.009 (*Local Government Bulletin B, Electronic Records Standards and Procedures*). TAC, Chapter 7, Section 7.72(d), provides that the governing body of a local government or designated records management officer must administer a program for the management of records created, received, maintained, used, or stored on electronic media.

Williamson County desires to adopt a policy for that purpose and to prescribe guidelines and procedures for the management of electronic mail consistent with the Electronic Records



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Standards and Procedures and in the interest of cost-effective and efficient recordkeeping, including long-term records retention.

## **SECTION 5. DEFINITIONS**

(1) Electronic mail message-A record created or received on an electronic mail system including brief notes, more formal or substantive narrative documents, and any attachments which may be transmitted with the message.

(2) Electronic mail receipt data-Information in electronic mail systems regarding the date and time of receipt of a message, and/or acknowledgment of receipt or access by addressee(s).

(3) Electronic mail system-A computer application used to create, receive, retain and transmit messages and other records. Excluded from this definition are file transfer utilities.

(4) Electronic mail transmission data-Information in electronic mail systems regarding the identities of sender and addressee(s), and the date and time messages were sent.

(5) Electronic media-All media capable of being read by a computer including computer hard disks, magnetic tapes, optical disks, or similar machine-readable media.

(6) Electronic record-The information that is maintained in electronic format in a computer for computer processing and the product of computer processing of that information that satisfies the definition of a government record in the Local Government Code, Chapter 201, Section 201.003(8).

(7) Electronic records system-Any information system that produces, manipulates, and stores state records by using a computer.

(8) Mailing list service-An electronic mailing list hosting service (e.g., Listserv) used for discussions and announcements within a specified group of individuals. Subscribers to the service participate by sending information to and receiving information from the list using electronic mail messages.

(9) Records management officer-The person who administers the records management program established in each local government under the Local Government Code, Chapter 203, Section 203.025.

(10) Local government record- Any document, paper, letter, book, map, photograph,



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sound or video recording, microfilm, magnetic tape, electronic medium or other information recording medium, regardless of physical form or characteristic and regardless of whether public access to it is open or restricted under the laws of the state, created or received by a local government or any of its officers or employees pursuant to law, including an ordinance, or in the transaction of public business. The term does not include:

- (A) Extra identical copies of documents created only for convenience of reference of research by officers or employees of the local government;
- (B) Note, journals diaries, and similar documents created by an officer or employee of the local government for the officer's or employee's personal convenience;
- (C) Blank forms;
- (D) Stocks of publications;
- (E) Library and museum materials acquired solely for the purposes of reference of display;
- (F) Copies of document in any media furnished to members of the public to which they are entitled under Chapter 552, Government Code or other state law;
- (G) Any records, correspondence, notes memoranda or documents, other than a final written agreement described by Section 2009.054(c), Government Code, associated with a state department of institution, local government, special district, or other political subdivision of the state participated as a party, facilitated as an impartial third party, or facilitated as the administrator of a dispute resolution system or organization.

## **SECTION 6. SCOPE**

This policy applies to any electronic mail messages created, received, retained, used, or disposed of using Williamson County's electronic mail system.

## **SECTION 7. RETENTION REQUIREMENTS**

The Williamson County approved Control Schedule or Declaration of Compliance with the *Local Government Records Retention Schedules* provide access to the record series and the retention period for each series. It is the content and function of an e-mail message that determines the retention period for that message. All e-mail sent or received by a government is considered a government record. Therefore, all e-mail messages must be retained or disposed of according to the government's retention requirements. E-mail generally (but not always) falls into two common record series categories. These are:



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*Local Schedule GR, 1000-26, Correspondence and Internal Memoranda:*

(b) Administrative – Correspondence and internal memoranda pertaining to or arising from routine administration or operation of the policies, programs, services, and projects of a local government. Retention: 2 years.

(c) Routine – Correspondence and internal memoranda such as letters of transmittal, requests for publications, internal meeting notice and similar routine matters. Retention: AV (after purpose of record is not longer deemed administratively valuable.)

## **SECTION 8. USER RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is the responsibility of the user of the e-mail system, with guidance and training from the Records Management Officer, to manage e-mail messages according to the government's established retention periods. It is the responsibility of the sender of e-mail messages within the government's e-mail system and recipients of messages from outside the government to retain the messages for the approved retention period. Names of sender, recipient, date/time of the message, as well as any attachments must be retained with the message. Except for listserv mailing services, distribution lists must be able to identify the sender and recipient of the message. User responsibilities may be mitigated by the use of a server level automated classification system.

## **SECTION 9. MAINTENANCE OF ELECTRONIC MAIL**

Records created using an e-mail system may be saved for their approved retention period by one of the following:

- (1) Print message and file in appropriate hard copy file.
- (2) Place in folders and save on personal network drive or C:drive.
- (3) Save to removable disk. 3.5" disks are not recommended for retention periods of more than one year due to the instability of this medium.
- (4) Transfer to an automated records management software application.
- (5) Managed at the server by an automated classification system.



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## SECTION 10. DISPOSITION OF ELECTRONIC MAIL

The process for the legal disposition of government records (including electronic mail) is subject to the same documentation requirements as any other format or medium. This usually requires management permission and some type of disposition log to adequately document disposition and destruction of electronic records. (Local Governments are not required to keep a disposition/destruction log but the practice is strongly advised.) Section 7.78 of the *Electronic Records Standards and Procedures* (relating to the Destruction of Electronic Records) states that:

- (a) Electronic records may be destroyed only in accordance with the Local Government Code, Section 202.001
- (b) Each local government must ensure that:
  - (1) Electronic records scheduled for destruction are disposed of in a manner that ensure protection of any confidential information; and

Magnetic storage media previously used for electronic records containing confidential information are not reused if the previously recorded information can be compromised by reuse in anyway.