



HARRIS COUNTY | HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL

PERSONNEL POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL

EFFECTIVE DATE:
AUGUST 8, 2026



HARRIS COUNTY PERSONNEL POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL

EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

Name of Employee (Print): _____ Employee ID# _____

Department: _____

**These Policies and Procedures Apply to Your Job.
Please Read Them Carefully.**

- I have received my copy of the Harris County Personnel Policies & Procedures effective August 8, 2026 or have accessed them via the internet at <https://hrm.harriscountytexas.gov/Human-Resources>.
- It is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies and procedures in this document and any revisions made to these policies.
- I acknowledge if I receive Paid Parental Leave and do not return to work for at least 180 consecutive calendar days of continuous service immediately after the expiration of such leave, I will repay the Paid Parental Leave funds received.
- Upon separation from Harris County, I will return all County equipment and property. Any equipment or property not returned in a timely manner will be deducted from my pay or final benefits check.
- I understand that the Auditor's Office is authorized by these policies to make payroll deductions from employees' wages or salary. By my signature, below I request and authorize wage deductions from my payroll, final benefits check(s), and/or compensable accrued leave balances in the event of overpayments in my payroll, or in order to reimburse the County for equipment that I have lost through my own negligence, or have intentionally damaged, or failed to return. I understand that before any deductions occur, I will receive written notice of the specific amount owed and the amount and method of deduction.
- These policies and procedures govern my employment, and if I violate any of them, I will be subject to appropriate discipline.
- I should talk to my supervisor if I have any questions about these policies and procedures or issues not addressed in them.

Employee Signature: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____

Date: _____

**THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED AND SIGNED AT THE TIME OF ISSUANCE/ACCESSIBILITY OF THE
EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK. A COPY OF THIS ACKNOWLEDGMENT IS TO BE PLACED IN EACH
EMPLOYEE'S PERSONNEL FILE.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Acknowledgment Form</u>	ii	9.03 <u>Employee Assistance Program</u>	
Table of Contents	iii	9.04 <u>Retirement</u>	
<u>Introduction</u>	1	9.05 <u>Deferred Compensation</u> <u>(457 Savings Plan)</u>	
<u>Section 1.</u> Definitions.....	2	9.06 <u>Workers' Compensation</u>	
<u>Section 2.</u> Conduct, Ethics, Fraud, and Confidentiality	6	<u>Section 10.</u> Emergency Situations.....	44
<u>Section 3.</u> Equal Employment Opportunity Statement.....	10	<u>Section 11.</u> Telework.....	47
<u>Section 4.</u> Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment.....	13	<u>Section 12.</u> Time Off and Leaves of Absence.....	52
<u>Section 5.</u> Americans with Disabilities Act	17	12.01 <u>Overtime Compensation and</u> <u>Compensatory Time</u>	
<u>Section 6.</u> Workplace Safety	19	12.02 <u>Holidays</u>	
6.01 <u>Drug-Free and Alcohol-Free</u> <u>Workplace</u>		12.03 <u>Vacation</u>	
6.02 <u>Violence-Free Workplace</u>		12.04 <u>Sick Leave</u>	
6.03 <u>Driver and Vehicle Safety</u>		12.05 <u>Sick Leave Pool</u>	
<u>Section 7.</u> County Property and Electronic Services Policy.....	22	12.06 <u>Jury and Witness Duty</u>	
<u>Section 8.</u> Payroll Procedures, Time Reporting, and Compensation	30	12.07 <u>Military Leave</u>	
<u>Section 9.</u> Group Health and Related Benefits.....	36	12.08 <u>Paid Parental Leave</u>	
9.01 <u>Health Benefits</u>		12.09 <u>Infant Sick Leave</u>	
9.02 <u>Verification of Eligibility, Enrollment</u> <u>Periods, and Changes to Coverage</u>		12.10 <u>Pregnancy and Birth of a</u> <u>Child</u>	
		12.11 <u>Leave of Absence (LOA)</u>	
		12.12 <u>Funeral/Bereavement Leave</u>	
		12.13 <u>Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)</u>	
		12.14 <u>Administrative Leave</u>	
		<u>Section 13.</u> Grievance Procedures.....	81
		<u>Section 14.</u> Performance Management.....	87
		<u>Section 15.</u> Separation from Employment.....	90
		<u>Section 16.</u> Consultation Policy.....	93



INTRODUCTION

These Personnel Policies and Procedures apply to employees of Harris County (County) and the Harris County Flood Control District (District) and are effective August 8, 2026. This version supersedes all previous personnel regulations.

Any reference to “Harris County,” the “County,” or “we” in these Personnel Policies and Procedures means “Harris County and the Harris County Flood Control District.” The County and the District are not the same employer.

We have prepared this document to explain to you the policies and procedures related to your job and to set clear expectations. It is not all-inclusive; individual departments may adopt additional internal policies. Ask your supervisor if you have questions about this document or your department’s internal policies.

The sections about the conditions of employment and compensation and benefits apply to everyone unless stated otherwise. The remaining sections apply to everyone *unless* an elected official, appointed official, board, or appointing authority adopts a different written policy. For example, if you work for an elected official, they can’t adopt a more generous vacation or sick leave policy. They could, though, adopt a more stringent policy about personal use of County equipment.

Employees have no employment tenure. Employment is at-will for an indefinite period. The County and the employee are free to terminate employment with or without notice at any time for any reason. These regulations do not constitute an employment contract or a guarantee of continued employment.

The County reserves the right to amend these Policies and Procedures unilaterally at any time, including the termination of benefits.

These Policies and Procedures do not supersede any applicable state or federal law. If a conflict exists between this document and state or federal law, the state or federal law governs. We distribute the Policies and Procedures to Department Heads who ensure that each new and current employee signs the Acknowledgment Form. They are also available via the Internet. If any ambiguity arises as to the meaning or interpretation of this document, the ambiguity is resolved in the County’s favor.



HARRIS COUNTY | HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL



SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS

1.01 ACTIVE DUTY

The actual performance of work or duties prescribed by statute and/or assigned by the Department Head. An employee's first day of work must include active duty, or hours actually worked.

1.02 BREAK IN EMPLOYMENT

Any period of **more than 7 calendar days**, other than a valid Leave of Absence, during which a person is not employed by the County.

Example: John ends employment in Department A on June 15th. He must start actually working in Department B on June 22nd.

1.03 CALENDAR YEAR

One-year period that begins on January 1 and ends on December 31.

1.04 COMPENSATORY TIME (COMP TIME)

Paid time off provided to employees in certain circumstances. Compensatory Time may refer to paid time off when it is being earned or when it is being used.

1.05 CREDITABLE SERVICE

The length of continuous employment with the County beginning on the date hired as a Regular Employee and continuing until the individual is no longer a Regular Employee or incurs a Break in Employment, whichever occurs first.

1.06 DEPARTMENT HEAD

Department heads are deemed Key employees, including for purposes of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Department Heads are exempt employees who do not accrue vacation, compensatory time, or sick time. Only individuals who meet the following criteria are eligible for Department Head designation and status and must be:

- (i) An elected official or a person appointed to fill a vacated elected office; or
- (ii) A person whose designation as head of a department is pursuant to authority of a board or elected official separate and apart from Commissioners Court; or
- (iii) A person appointed by Commissioners Court to serve as the head of a department created by Commissioners Court and who reports directly to Commissioners Court; or
- (iv) A person designated by the County Administrator as a department head when the individual's hiring and discharge requires ratification by Commissioners Court (Commissioners Court Ratified Department Heads); or
- (v) A person designated by the County Administrator as a department head, but the individual's hiring and discharge does not require ratification by Commissioners Court (County Administrator Department Head Designees).

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary elsewhere, County Administrator Department Head Designees must submit timesheets reflecting the dates and hours worked on each day.

1.07 DOCK TIME

For each workweek in which the [Hours Actually Worked](#) plus Paid Absences total less than an employee's required hours, the deficiency is Dock Time. Dock Time applies to both Exempt and Non-Exempt Employees. The deduction calculations are based upon the employee's regular work schedule and rate of pay in effect during the pay period in which the Dock Time occurs. Dock Time is one type of Unpaid Absence.

1.08 EMPLOYEE'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER

Your spouse, children, stepchildren, foster children or any other ward legally placed by the State of Texas, parent, stepparent, siblings, stepsiblings, grandparent, grandchild, parents of your spouse, and the spouses of your children.

1.09 FLSA CLASSIFICATIONS

1.091 Exempt Employee

An employee who is Exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) minimum wage and maximum hour requirements. Department Heads ensure that employee's job duties are accurately captured using Auditor's Form 130 so that FLSA exemption can be determined.

1.092 Non-Exempt Employee

Employees whose job functions entitle them to FLSA minimum wage and maximum hour rules.

1.10 HOURS ACTUALLY WORKED

The time an employee is actually on [Active Duty](#), [Paid Absences](#) and [Unpaid Absences](#) are not Hours Actually Worked.

1.11 LONGEVITY PAY

Additional compensation based on length of continuous [Creditable Service](#).

1.12 OVERTIME

Any amount of [Hours Actually Worked](#) a Non-Exempt employee has in excess of 40 hours per workweek. **In lieu of cash payment for overtime, [Non-Exempt](#) employees may receive [Compensatory Time](#).**

1.13 PAID ABSENCES OR PAID LEAVE

Absences the County pays for, such as Holidays, Funeral Leave, Jury or Witness Duty, Sick Leave, Compensatory Time, and Vacation Leave. **Employees may not “buy back” any Paid Leave.**

1.14 FISCAL YEAR

On January 26, 2021, Commissioners Court approved a change in the fiscal year beginning in 2022. Starting in 2022, Harris County’s fiscal year will begin October 1st and run through September 30th. Under the proposed transition there will be a 7-month fiscal year from March 1, 2022, through September 30, 2022, followed by a full, 12-month fiscal year from October 1, 2022 - September 30, 2023.

1.15 PAYROLL YEAR

The period of time that begins with the first day of the pay period that relates to the first paycheck issued in a calendar year and ends with the last day of the pay period that relates to the final paycheck issued in the same calendar year.

1.16 POSITION CLASSIFICATIONS

1.161 Regular Position

An employee hired for an indefinite period and regularly scheduled to work at least 32 hours per week and eligible for all employment benefits.

1.162 Part-time Position

An employee hired for an indefinite period and only eligible for legally required employment benefits.

1.163 Temporary Position

An employee hired for a specified project or for a limited period of time.

1.17 STANDARD WORKWEEK

1.171 The Standard Workweek begins at 12:01 a.m. Saturday and ends at midnight the following Friday night.

1.172 Department Heads adopt the most efficient schedule for their department operations so long as it conforms to the required time schedules shown for the positions in the salary budget (40 hours weekly, unless otherwise specified in the maximum salary schedule).

1.18 UNPAID ABSENCES OR UNPAID LEAVE

Absences the County does not pay for such as [Dock Time](#) and unpaid Family and Medical Leave Act time.



HARRIS COUNTY | HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL



SECTION 2.

CONDUCT, ETHICS, FRAUD, AND CONFIDENTIALITY

SECTION 2. CONDUCT, ETHICS, FRAUD, AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- 2.01** As a Harris County employee, you must maintain the highest standards of ethical behavior, including adhering to the [Harris County Code of Conduct](#). Always act with honesty and integrity, respect, confidentiality, and fairness in the execution of your job.
- 2.02** Be professional in the workplace and any time or place you are engaged in work-related activities. Protect the County's assets and its reputation through professional and personal conduct and avoid circumstances that create an appearance of impropriety.
- 2.03** Harris County employees are expected to perform job assignments and execute duties within the scope of their employment and to the best of their ability. Insubordination occurs when an employee refuses or fails to carry out an assignment or instruction. Insubordination and other such infractions such as flouting supervisory authority may be addressed through discipline up to and including termination of employment.
- 2.04** Harris County employees shall not use their official County position, title, authority, resources, or access for personal advantage, special privilege, or to provide any person or employee with an advantage not otherwise available without the misuse of a County position.
- 2.05** Fraudulent behavior is strictly prohibited. Fraud is broadly defined and may include any type of intentional deception for the purpose of personal or business gain or damage to an individual or organization. Examples of fraudulent behavior include:
- Accepting compensation for speaking engagement connected with your Harris County position or regarding information you received due to your Harris County position.
 - Lying on an employment application or falsifying records.
 - Providing false receipts for mileage or travel reimbursement.

You must be a good steward of the resources entrusted to you and exercise due diligence to prevent and detect criminal conduct and non-compliance with laws and policies. Fraud, waste, abuse, or non-compliance must be reported to an appropriate supervisor, manager, or to the Harris County Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline identified below. Engaging in acts of fraud may result in disciplinary action or civil or criminal liability.

- 2.06** Harris County is the custodian of many types of information, including information that is confidential and private. If you have access to such information, be familiar with and comply with all applicable laws pertaining to access, use, protection, and disclosure of the information.
- 2.07** As a Harris County employee, you must avoid any activity that creates a real or apparent conflict of interest. Conflicts may exist in any relationship where the County's best interests may be different from an official's or an employee's best interests.

Conflicts of interests may also arise in situations where an official or employee employs immediate family members or has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from a party considered for a contract or procurement.

2.08 Department Heads are responsible for overseeing their employees and ensuring compliance with these standards, including:

- a. Conducting appropriate post-offer background checks on applicants to minimize the risk that employees will commit fraud or other illegal acts in the performance of their duties in accordance with the Fair Chance Policy in Section 3; and
- b. Effectively communicating these conduct and ethical standards to all employees and encouraging employees to participate in periodic ethics training, whether provided within the department or through HRT Career Development (which offers video and online ethics training available 24-7 and live ethics training provided quarterly as well as at each new employee orientation).
- c. Department Heads may require employees to request approval for second employment or extra-duty jobs to ensure that it does not present a conflict of interest, appearance of conflict, or interference with County employment.

2.09 Any employee who believes that fraud, waste or abuse has occurred or is occurring in violation of the [Harris County Code of Conduct](#) should report the facts or circumstances giving rise to this belief as follows:

- A report of fraud, waste or abuse should be submitted to the **Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Hotline Number: (866) 556-8181** or via the website at www.harriscounty.ethicspoint.com
- A report of fraud, waste or abuse should be made to the reporting service as promptly as possible, but not later than thirty (30) days after the reporting party becomes aware of the facts or circumstances that appear to violate the Harris County Code of Conduct.

2.10 Employees who report suspected fraud, waste or abuse can do so without fear of retaliation. Retaliating against any employee for reporting suspected ethical violations or fraud is strictly prohibited. All reports will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. The investigation may include individual interviews with parties involved and any witnesses to the alleged conduct. Employees must cooperate in all investigations. Department Heads will be notified of findings.

2.11 Department Heads are responsible for administering appropriate discipline to any employees found to have committed an ethical violation to prevent similar offenses in the future. The appropriate discipline should be based on all the facts and circumstances surrounding the situation and may range from an oral or written warning, re-training, suspension, demotion or transfer, up to immediate dismissal.

2.12 Ask your supervisor if you have questions about the Harris County Code of Conduct, ethics or confidentiality.

2.13 NEPOTISM

It is the County's policy to make employment decisions on the basis of individual merit and avoid any appearance of nepotism in making those decisions.

2.131 Public Officials (identified as applied in Texas Gov't Code § 573.041) are prohibited from appointing or hiring a person related to the official within the third degree by consanguinity (blood) or the second degree by affinity (marriage).

➤ Consanguinity are individuals related by blood to the following degrees:

- First degree – parent or child (including adopted children)
- Second degree – grandparent, grandchild, sibling
- Third degree – great grandparent, great grandchild, aunt, uncle, niece, or nephew

➤ Affinity are individuals related by marriage to the following degrees:

- First degree – spouse, son in-law or daughter in-law, stepchild, or parent in-law
- Second degree – spouse's sibling, sibling's spouse, spouse's grandparent, spouse's grandchild

2.132 Except as otherwise required by law, Department Heads have discretion to allow relatives to work in the same department, as long as there are no business or job-related conflicts of interests. However, Department Heads should be cognizant of the questions of perceived fairness and impartiality that may arise in such cases. In circumstances where relatives are working together, the following should be followed to avoid real or perceived conflicts of interests:

- Employee should not be, directly or indirectly, involved in employment-related decisions regarding a family member. This includes hiring, supervision, appointment, removal, or disciplinary actions.
- Employee should not evaluate or audit the work of a family member.
- Employee should not approve of payment, invoices, or work for family members.

2.133 Employees must immediately disclose to their manager or their Human Resources department any familial relationships, not limited to those identified above, that may result in an actual or perceived conflict of interest so that the matter may be evaluated and addressed accordingly.



HARRIS COUNTY | HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL



SECTION 3.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

SECTION 3. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

3.01 Harris County and the Harris County Flood Control District provide equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, pregnancy, disability, genetic information, or any other protected class in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. No Department Head or employee may fail or refuse to hire or discharge any individual or discriminate against any individual with respect to the terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, including hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, transfer, leaves of absence, and compensation. Religious discrimination includes failing to provide a reasonable accommodation for an employee's religious practices when the accommodation does not impose an undue hardship. Nor may any Department Head or employee limit, segregate, or classify employees in any way that would deprive or tend to deprive them of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect their status as employees, because of their race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, pregnancy, disability, genetic information, or any other protected class in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

3.02 FAIR CHANCE POLICY

The County has adopted the Fair Chance Policy giving opportunities to individuals with arrest and/or conviction records to obtain gainful employment. The Fair Chance Policy applies to (1) all departments under the direction of Commissioners Court and (2) the department of any elected or official appointed by an entity other than Commissioners Court who chooses to adopt this policy.

3.021 Positions advertised through the Human Resources & Talent (HRT) Department do not include questions seeking an applicant's criminal history, unless the position is in a law enforcement department, in which case such information may be solicited.

3.022 Departments shall conduct criminal history checks on applicants only if and after the department has extended a conditional offer of employment to the applicant. However, criminal history checks may be performed at an earlier point in the hiring process for positions in which state or federal law, or County agreements governing access to certain databases, require a criminal history check and/or disqualification of certain applicants based on the results of that check.

3.023 Departments shall not consider an applicant's records of arrest if not followed by a conviction (unless charges are pending during the criminal history check, in which case it may be considered as indicated by this policy); sealed, dismissed,

or expunged convictions; or misdemeanor convictions where no jail sentence can be imposed; and

- 3.024** Unless the applicant is determined to be unqualified for the position due to state or federal law, or County agreements governing access to certain databases, may only deny an applicant employment based on a prior conviction(s) if the department makes a good faith determination that the conviction(s) is relevant to the position such that its consideration is appropriate and, then, only after an individualized assessment of the applicant's situation that leads to a determination that the applicant is no longer deemed suitable for the position.
- 3.025** If a criminal history check yields information that is of concern to the hiring department, the applicant will be informed of the conviction(s) that are the basis for concern and be provided an opportunity to present information regarding inaccuracy, mitigating circumstances, and rehabilitation; the applicant's situation will then be assessed on an individualized basis, unless, again, the applicant is ineligible due to state or federal law, or County agreements governing access to certain databases.



HARRIS COUNTY | HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL



SECTION 4.

NON-DISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-HARASSMENT

SECTION 4. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND ANTI-HARASSMENT

We are committed to maintaining a work environment free from discrimination and harassment. In accordance with this commitment, the County prohibits discrimination and harassment based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity), national origin, age, disability, genetic information (including family medical history), or any other protected class in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. Retaliation against any individual who has reported discrimination or harassment will also not be tolerated and will result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

4.01 CROWN ACT

Harris County values their employees and prohibits discrimination based on hair texture and style. This includes, but is not limited to, hair texture, hair type, or protective hairstyles such as afros, braids, locks, and twists. This does not alter the ability of Department Heads to restrict certain hairstyles due to a bona fide occupational qualification or that directly interfere with an essential job function or a safety/security precaution.

4.02 DEFINITIONS

4.021 Discrimination means treating an individual less favorably because of their race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity), national origin, age, disability, genetic information (including family medical history), or any other protected class in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

4.022 Harassment is unwelcome conduct that is based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity), national origin, age, disability, and genetic information (including family medical history). It becomes unlawful where 1) enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment, or 2) the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or offensive.

4.0221 Offensive conduct may include, but is not limited to, offensive jokes, slurs, epithets or name calling, physical assaults or threats, intimidation, ridicule or mockery, insults or put-downs, offensive objects or pictures, and interference with work performance. It may also include negative stereotyping, threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts, denigrating jokes, and written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group. It can also take many other forms, including,

but not limited to, e-mail, phone calls or voice messages, or text messages.

4.023 Sexual harassment includes but is not limited to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature 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 work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

4.024 Retaliation means treating employees unfavorably because they complained about discrimination or harassment on the job, filed a charge or complaint alleging discrimination or harassment, or participated in any manner in an employment discrimination proceeding. It includes mistreatment for raising discrimination that affects others.

4.03 REPORTING VIOLATIONS

4.031 If you have witnessed or been the subject of discrimination, including harassment or retaliation, you must report it to:

- your supervisor; or
- your Department Grievance Coordinator; or
- the person designated in your departmental harassment policy; or your
- Department Head; or
- the Director of the Harris County Human Resources & Talent Department or the Director's designee.

Individuals designated to receive complaints of this policy, including supervisors, Department Grievance Coordinators, and Department Heads are required to report such complaints to the Director of the Harris County Human Resources & Talent Department or the Director's Designee.

4.032 If you make a report under this section and are not satisfied with the response given, you must report the alleged act(s) to another person on the list.

- 4.033** All reports will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. The investigation may include individual interviews with the parties involved and any witnesses to the alleged conduct. Employees must cooperate in all investigations. Immediate and appropriate corrective action will be taken and may include but is not limited to; reporting the complaint to another designated individual, initiating an investigation, evaluating the possibility of temporary work relocation and reassignment, and taking appropriate corrective action.
- 4.034 Retaliation** against someone for reporting harassment or discrimination or for participating in an investigation is a serious violation of this policy. If you think someone is retaliating against you, report it immediately. Appropriate corrective action will be taken, if necessary.
- 4.035** County employees and terminated County employees may assert a Whistleblower Grievance alleging violation of the Texas whistleblower act by filing a grievance within 90 days of a suspension, termination, or other adverse employment action. Whistleblower grievances must be filed directly with the County Grievance Coordinator using the [form](#) established by HRT. Thereafter, HRT may reject the grievance or render a final decision within 60 days of receipt of the grievance.
- 4.036** False and malicious complaints of harassment, discrimination, or retaliation may be the subject of appropriate disciplinary action.

4.04 DISCIPLINE

- 4.041** Any County employee who is found, after appropriate investigation, to have engaged in discriminatory or harassing behavior prohibited by this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.



HARRIS COUNTY | HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL



SECTION 5.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

SECTION 5. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

- 5.01** Harris County does not discriminate against employees with disabilities and is committed to complying with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified applicants or employees with disabilities provided that such accommodation does not constitute an undue hardship on the operation of the department. If you need a reasonable accommodation, talk to your supervisor, your department's ADA Coordinator, or the [Harris County ADA Coordinator](#). Departments will engage in an interactive process with you to identify possible accommodations, if any, to help you do your job.
- 5.02** When the County has sufficient information suggesting that a disability-related limitation may be affecting an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of their position, documentation may be requested of the employee.
- 5.03** An employee's failure or refusal to engage in the interactive process, including by failing to provide requested medical documentation, may result in the delay or denial of accommodations.
- 5.04** The County must provide certain accommodations needed by people with disabilities to participate in services, programs, and activities Harris County offers. For example, to facilitate effective communication, the ADA requires the County to **provide auxiliary aids and services such as sign language interpreters, telecommunication devices for the deaf, hearing aid-compatible amplified and captioned telephones, video phones, and assistive listening devices, free of charge to citizens** who need an accommodation to communicate when participating in or seeking access to County services, programs, and activities.
- 5.05** Make sure you know how to access the necessary auxiliary aids and services when requested. Obtain additional information on accessing auxiliary aids and services from your departmental ADA Coordinator, the Harris County ADA Coordinator, or the Human Resources & Talent Department's [ADA webpage](#).
- 5.06** All medical information obtained in connection with an accommodation request, including documentation of a disability or functional limitation, is confidential and maintained separately from an employee's personnel file. Access to such information is limited to individuals with a legitimate need to know, consistent with applicable federal and state law.



HARRIS COUNTY | HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL



SECTION 6.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

SECTION 6. WORKPLACE SAFETY

Harris County is committed to providing a safe, productive, and secure workplace and has adopted policies for a Drug-Free and Alcohol-Free Workplace and a Violence-Free Workplace to meet that goal. You must report to work in a suitable mental and physical condition to perform your job safely and effectively.

6.01 DRUG-FREE AND ALCOHOL-FREE WORKPLACE

- 6.011** Alcohol and drug abuse pose a threat to the health and safety of employees, our clients, and the protection of County equipment and facilities. For these reasons, the County is committed to a workplace free of drugs and alcohol. Information is available to tell employees about:
- the County's policy of maintaining a drug-free and alcohol-free workplace;
 - the dangers of abuse of controlled substances and illegal drugs and alcohol abuse;
 - the coverage for substance abuse treatment programs that is available for eligible employees through the group health plan and the Employee Assistance Program; and
 - the consequences for violating this policy.
- 6.012** The County also conducts pre-employment, safety-sensitive, reasonable suspicion, random and certain post-accident controlled substance and/or alcohol screening pursuant to the Harris County Drug & Alcohol Screening Policy for [Commercial Drivers](#) and [Non-Commercial Drivers](#), or your departmental policy.
- 6.013** Employees who must maintain a commercial drivers' license (CDL) as a requirement of their job are subject to alcohol and controlled substance testing pursuant to U.S. Department of Transportation regulations. Keep your CDL current and immediately notify your Department Head of any change in the status of your license.
- 6.014** You are responsible for learning the possible effects of legal prescription and non-prescription drugs you use. Tell your supervisor or designated Department representative of any side effects that might impair your ability to do your job safely or effectively. The County may, at its discretion, require employees in safety-sensitive positions to refrain from working while taking *any* drug or medication, or require such employees to obtain written authorization from their physicians about their ability to perform their essential job duties safely while taking the medication.

- 6.015** Employees convicted for a criminal drug or alcohol law violation must report such conviction in writing to their supervisor or designated department representative within 5 days of the conviction. A failure to disclose or notify may result in discipline up to and including termination.
- 6.016** Due to the widespread availability of certain products (i.e., Cannabidiol (CBD), CBD oil, marijuana, etc.) including state laws legalizing recreational and medical use, employees are responsible for understanding that the use of any product derived from the cannabis plant could result in a positive drug test and in a violation of the Harris County Drug and Alcohol Screening Policy.

6.02 VIOLENCE-FREE WORKPLACE

- 6.021** We strive to provide a safe work environment free of violence or threats of violence, including intimidation and bullying, against employees and the visiting public. All employees must conduct themselves in a professional manner. Threats of violence as to County personnel or property will not be tolerated.
- 6.022** Examples of bullying include pushing, shoving, kicking, poking, tripping, assault or threat of physical assault, damage to a person's work area or property, slandering, ridiculing, or maligning a person, name calling that is hurtful, insulting, or humiliating, using a person as the target of jokes, or making abusive and offensive remarks.
- 6.023** Be alert and tell appropriate management personnel of any behavior you think violates or could constitute a violation of this policy. Retaliation against an employee who reports threats of workplace violence is strictly prohibited.
- 6.024** Anyone found to be responsible for threats of, or actual violence or other prohibited conduct will be subject to prompt disciplinary action up to and including termination.

6.03 DRIVER AND VEHICLE SAFETY

- 6.031** Employees who operate County or personal vehicles for County business should receive a copy and adhere to the "Driver and Vehicle Safety Program" and "Harris County Fleet Vehicle Policy".
- 6.032** Employees who regularly drive as part of their County job are subject to periodic checks of their driver's license and must immediately notify their Department Head of any change in the status of their license. A failure to disclose or notify may result in discipline up to and including termination.



HARRIS COUNTY | HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL



SECTION 7.

COUNTY PROPERTY AND ELECTRONIC SERVICES POLICY

SECTION 7. COUNTY PROPERTY AND ELECTRONIC SERVICES POLICY

7.01 SCOPE

This policy applies to all County property, whether tangible or intangible, including desks, lockers, filing cabinets, electronic equipment, media, services, and new technologies as they emerge, including but not limited to, **computers, e-mail, telephones, cell phones, tablets, voicemail, fax machines, copiers, radios and wireless devices, wire services, and on-line services, including County Wi-Fi and the Internet**, that are:

- County property;
- accessed using County computer equipment or your own, via County-paid access methods; and/or
- used in a manner that identifies the individual as a County employee.

With the rapidly changing nature of technology, this policy cannot provide guidelines for every possible situation. Instead, it expresses the County's philosophy and sets forth general principles. For more detailed, technology-specific requirements see the [IT Security Policies](#) and follow them at all times.

7.02 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

7.021 Use County Assets Wisely

The County's assets are intended to be used primarily for the benefit of the County. Protect these assets and use them wisely.

7.022 No Expectation of Privacy

You have no expectation of privacy in the workplace, in your work-related conduct, in the use of County-owned or County-provided equipment or supplies, or anything you create, store, send, or receive on the County computer system. Assume that what you do while on duty or using County equipment is not private. Although searches are normally not conducted without a valid reason, all work areas and county equipment, including but not limited to offices, desks, files, lockers (even if you provide a lock), computers, phones, devices, and electronic media are subject to search at any time. County-provided software, licenses, subscriptions, and user accounts must be used only for authorized County business and in accordance with applicable licensing terms. Employees may not share accounts, license keys, credentials, or software access with unauthorized individuals.

7.023 County Assets must be Returned Upon Employment Separation

Harris County assets must be returned within 72 hours of separation of employment. Employees who separate employment may be held responsible for the fair market value of any unreturned hardware, incomplete hardware or damaged hardware. Failure or refusal to return assets may result in deductions from final pay and/or accrued compensable leave balances.

7.024 Technology Asset Management and Control

County technology assets may not be transferred, reassigned, retained, donated, salvaged, recycled, or disposed of without appropriate County authorization. Asset assignment location and custody information must be maintained in the County-approved assets management system.

7.025 Lost, Stolen, Damaged, or Unreturned Technology Assets

Lost, stolen, missing, or damaged technology assets must be reported immediately to the employee's supervisor and the appropriate County technology or security support team for the fair market value of any unreturned hardware, incomplete hardware or damaged hardware. Failure or refusal to return assets may result in deductions from final pay and/or accrued compensable leave balances.

7.026 Software, Licenses, and Technology Subscriptions

County software, licenses, subscriptions, and cloud services must be acquired, assigned, tracked, renewed, transferred, and discontinued through approved County processes. Employees must cooperate with periodic software usage and license verification activities. Unused or no longer required licenses may be reclaimed and reassigned.

7.03 MONITORING PRACTICES

- 7.031** Generally, we do not monitor electronic information you create or communicate by e-mail, word processing, utility programs, spreadsheets, voicemail, telephones, Internet access, etc. However, we routinely monitor:
- a. Usage patterns for voice and data communications (e.g. website accessed, length, time of day) for cost analysis, cost allocation, and to manage the County's gateway to the Internet. We also monitor the County network and computer systems for security incidents, patterns of unauthorized use, data leakage events, and other malicious activity that may present a potential threat to the County's information and information resources.
 - b. To the extent allowed by law, **County officials, Department Heads, and others are permitted to review your electronic files, messages, and usage to ensure compliance with the law and current County policies.**

7.04 CYBERSECURITY ANNUAL TRAINING REQUIREMENT

- 7.041** Subject to the amendment of Texas Government Code Ann. § 2054.5191, the State of Texas requires Harris County to:

- 7.0411** Identify all Harris County employees, including elected and appointed officials, with access to a local government computer system or database and use a computer to perform at least 25 percent of their required duties.
- 7.0412** Require identified Harris County employees, including elected and appointed officials, to complete an annual certified cybersecurity training and artificial intelligence (AI) awareness training.

Employees who do not complete the required annual cybersecurity training may have computer access denied.

- 7.0413** Harris County is required to verify and report the completion of a cybersecurity training program by employees and elected and appointed officials to the State of Texas by the end of the program year.
- 7.0414** Harris County is required to conduct periodic audits to ensure compliance with the statute.

7.05 PUBLIC INFORMATION ACT

- 7.051** Any Public Information Act (PIA) requests received should be forwarded to your department's PIA Officer and the Assistant County Attorney's designated Public Information Officer (PIO).
- 7.052** Emails, texts, and other electronic communications related to official County business are subject to the Public Information Act (PIA) regardless of where they are stored. Thus, if you use your personal devices to conduct County business or your personal email account to send or receive messages related to County business, that personal device or account may be subject to inspection to respond to a request for information under the PIA. The best practice is to use County email for all County business. If you must use your personal email account for County business, send a copy of the message to your Harris County account. To comply with records retention laws, all County business messages must be stored on a County email account no matter where the email originated.
- 7.053** If you text anything about County business other than transitory information, copy the text to your county email account. Texts to set up a meeting, say you are running late, or asking someone to call you are examples of transitory information.

If you use personal devices or account to conduct official County business, you may be required by law to provide information from those personal devices and accounts.

7.06 E-MAIL AND INTERNET ACCESS

Harris County provides e-mail, internet access, and access to other electronic forms of communication and information exchange to make communication more efficient and effective and because they are valuable sources of information for government-related work. We may limit and/or decrease Internet connection speeds, block Internet content, and remove Internet access for any individual or group deemed appropriate to enable availability and performance for critical County services.

7.061 Acceptable Uses

These are some of the *acceptable uses* of information technology.

- Communication and information exchange directly related to your job.
- Communication for professional development, to obtain continuing education or training, or to discuss issues related to your job.
- At the Department Head's discretion, you can use electronic media for incidental or *de minimis* personal matters.

7.062 Unacceptable Uses

These are some of the *unacceptable uses* of information technology.

- Knowingly transmitting, retrieving, or storing any communications that are discriminatory or harassing; derogatory toward any individual or group; obscene; defamatory or threatening; “chain letters”; or for any other purpose that is illegal or against County policy.
- Use for any **personal profit** or political gain.
- Use for purposes not directly related to your job whether before, after, or during normal business hours, unless your Department Head allows minimal personal use.
- Use to copy, retrieve, extract or forward copyrighted or proprietary material (including software, source code or other developer-created code, database files, documentation, articles, graphics, or downloaded information) unless you have the legal right and authorization to access, copy, extract, or distribute such material.
- Attempts to gain unauthorized access to any system, network, application, account, or data, including attempting to bypass security controls, exploit vulnerabilities, intercept information, or obtain, guess, or crack passwords or other authentication credentials.
- Use systems or communications in a manner that conceals or misrepresents the sender’s identity, impersonates another person or organization, or falsifies the source of a communication.
- Develop, acquire, distribute, test, or deploy software, scripts, or other code intended to harass users, gain unauthorized access to systems or networks, bypass security controls, disrupt operations, or damage or alter hardware, software, or data without prior authorization.
- Sensitive data using artificial intelligence (AI) must be handled securely. Adhere to Federal law, State law, and when applicable but not limited to, Harris County policies.
- Deliberately wasting computer resources or unfairly monopolizing resources, including, but not limited to, sending mass mailings or chain letters, spending excessive amounts of time on the Internet, playing games, engaging in online chat groups, printing multiple copies of documents, or otherwise creating unnecessary network traffic. Because audio, video, and picture files require significant storage space, files of this or any other sort may not be downloaded unless they are business-related.
- Use for online games and gambling, music, and movie downloads.

7.07 PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

We understand that social media can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with your co-workers and family and friends around the world. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media, we have established these guidelines.

7.071 Guidelines

Social media can mean many things. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on or via the Internet. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow employees, or otherwise adversely affects vendors, contractors, or others affiliated with the County, may result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal.

7.072 Know and follow the rules

Make sure your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that include discriminatory remarks, harassment, or threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal.

7.073 Be respectful

Always be fair and courteous to fellow employees and interns, vendors, contractors, or others affiliated with the County. Keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers or by discussing issues with your supervisor than by posting complaints online. Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video, or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage co-workers, vendors, contractors, or others affiliated with the County.

Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, national origin, disability, religion, age, or any other status protected by law or County policy.

7.074 Be honest and accurate

Be honest and accurate when posting information or news about the County. If you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about the County, your co-workers, vendors, contractors, or anyone affiliated with the County.

7.075 Maintain confidentiality and clearly identify opinions as your own

Maintain the confidentiality of information the County holds that is private or confidential. Do not post internal reports, documents, policies, procedures, or other internal business-related confidential communications. Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for the County without authorization.

If you write about the County, be clear and open about the fact that you are an employee and make it clear that your views do not represent those of the County. It is best to include a disclaimer, such as “The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Harris County.”

7.076 Using social media at work

Refrain from using social media while on working time or on equipment we provide, unless it is work-related and authorized by your manager. Do not use your County email address to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools for personal use.

7.077 Beware of what you post online

No matter what social media platform you use, consider the type of information you choose to share with others. Here are the common cyber risks you may face when using social media:

- **Sharing sensitive information.** Sensitive information includes anything that can help a person steal your identity or find you, such as your full name, Social Security number, address, birthdate, phone number, or where you were born.
- **Posting questionable content.** Questionable content can include pictures, videos, or opinions that make you seem unprofessional or mean and can damage your reputation or the reputation of the County.
- **Tracking your location.** Many social media platforms allow you to check in and broadcast your location, or automatically adds your location to photos and posts. You could be telling a stalker exactly where to find you or telling a thief that you are not home.

7.08 OFFICIAL DEPARTMENT SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Official social media accounts must be established, managed, and monitored by authorized personnel for legitimate County business. Departments are responsible for ensuring accounts are properly maintained, comply with County standards, protect public records, and adhere to applicable laws, policies, and content management requirements.

7.09 RETALIATION IS PROHIBITED

We will not take negative action against an employee for reporting a possible violation of this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who retaliates against another employee for reporting a possible violation of this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal.



HARRIS COUNTY | HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL



SECTION 8.

PAYROLL PROCEDURES, TIME REPORTING, AND COMPENSATION

SECTION 8. PAYROLL PROCEDURES, TIME REPORTING, AND COMPENSATION

8.01 EMPLOYMENT EFFECTIVE DATES AND OTHER PRELIMINARY MATTERS

- 8.011** The County Auditor establishes procedures for payroll forms and documents. Departments must complete and retain information about the appointment, compensation, and separation of employees. **The Texas Payday Act does not apply to Harris County.**
- 8.012** No employment is effective until:
- the County Budget Officer approves the use of funds;
 - the Department completes and signs the employee compensation form; the person completes and signs the direct deposit or pay card form (the County does not issue pay checks); and
 - the person begins [Active Duty](#).
- 8.013** Department Heads have discretion to allow employees to begin active duty at any time.
- 8.014** Employees under 18 years old and unmarried when they start work must have their parent or guardian complete the I-9 and sign a parental release and indemnification agreement on [County Auditor Form 3399](#).
- 8.015** Departments must send copies of the *signed* Employee Compensation form, Change in Status form, and all other forms required by law or the Auditor, to the Auditor's Office immediately upon completion.
- 8.016** The Auditor verifies that the employment conforms to the maximum salary approved by Commissioners Court. The Department Head can set the employee's salary at any level up to the approved budget maximum for the position.
- 8.017** If your name, address, telephone number, or emergency contact change, update the information in the STARS Employee Self-Service portal or tell your department payroll person immediately.

8.02 CHANGES IN STATUS

- 8.021** Position control changes and changes in status (new positions, title changes, rate of pay, hours required, etc.) are prospective only and generally become effective on the first day of a pay period.
- 8.022** Department Heads must ensure all Temporary Positions do not exceed the maximum allocated hours authorized by Commissioners Court.

8.03 PAY OF ELECTED OR APPOINTED OFFICIALS

8.031 The County will prorate the pay of elected or appointed officials who vacate their positions prior to the end of their term based on the number of normal business days (Monday-Friday) in bi-weekly pay periods.

8.04 HOURS ACTUALLY WORKED

8.041 Breaks

No federal or state law entitles County employees to regularly scheduled breaks. Many departments, though, allow employees to take breaks during the day. Check with your supervisor to find out what your department's policy is. Breaks longer than 20 minutes are not paid.

8.042 Meal Periods

No federal or state law entitles County employees to meal periods. When meal periods are taken, they should be for at least 30 minutes. If a non-exempt employee is not completely relieved of duty during the meal period, the time is paid. Supervisors are responsible for making sure non-exempt employees who put a meal period on their timesheets did not actually work during that time.

8.043 Commuting

Normally, time spent commuting to and from work is not counted as Hours Actually Worked, even if you travel from home to an outlying job site. This is true whether you work at one work site or at different work sites. Generally, you are not at work until you reach the job site. But, if you have to report to a meeting place to receive instructions, perform other work there, or pick up tools, the travel from that meeting place to the work site is included in Hours Actually Worked.

8.044 Travel During the Workday

Time spent traveling directly from one work site to another work site during the workday is included in Hours Actually Worked.

Example: Sarah usually works from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 1001 Preston. One day she has a business meeting at 9 a.m. in Baytown and drives from home directly to the meeting. Her workday does not begin until she gets to the meeting place in Baytown. After the meeting, Sarah drives directly to 1001 Preston. Her travel time from the meeting in Baytown directly to her office at 1001 Preston counts as Hours Actually Worked.

8.045 Out-of-County Travel

8.0451 One Day Trips

As a general rule, all travel time on a one-day out-of-County trip is included in [Hours Actually Worked](#) (except for meal periods or time spent traveling from home to a mode of public transportation, if applicable).

8.0452 Overnight Trips

Travel time, excluding meal periods, **during normal working hours (even on non-working days)** on an overnight out-of-County trip is included in Hours Actually Worked. Travel time as a *passenger* in any type of vehicle **outside of regular working hours** is not work time. However, if you are offered public transportation (for example, air, bus, or train fare) but ask to drive yourself, your Department Head chooses whether to count as Hours Actually Worked the time spent driving or the time that would have counted as Hours Actually Worked if you had used the public transportation.

- 8.046** Harris County encourages eligible employees to participate in voting. Most employee work schedules should provide sufficient time to vote outside of regular working hours. However, employees whose work schedules do not allow for at least two consecutive hours to vote outside working hours must be provided with two hours of excused paid time off during their workday to cast their vote.

Example: Polls will open on Election Day from 7:00AM to 7:00PM. Nick's work schedule is 8:00AM to 8:00PM. Nick's work schedule does not have two consecutive hours outside of his work schedule to vote. Nick must be provided with two hours of paid time off while on duty to go cast his vote.

8.05 TIME RECORDS, DEDUCTIONS, AND CORRECTIONS

- 8.051** All employees are required to submit their work hours in a timely manner. Failure to submit your time by the payroll deadline may result in a delayed payment. Supervisors review time records for accuracy. Department Heads are responsible for preparing timely and accurate time records and submitting their payroll to the Auditor.
- 8.052** You must report your time accurately and **check your records each pay period** to make sure the County processed it (including time, benefits, and incentives) correctly. Report any issues to your payroll clerk.

The County Auditor or designee may inspect time records at any time and may make payroll deductions for any overpayments.

Section 8: Payroll Procedures, Time Reporting, and Compensation

- 8.053** Employees may not reclaim vacation hours accrued beyond the maximum or expired floating holiday hours through a supplemental payroll.
- 8.054** Except for corrections, payrolls are final upon approval by the Department Head. Department Heads must submit changes that may result in an overpayment to a terminated employee *immediately*. Department Heads submit other changes as a supplemental payroll. Payroll changes or corrections are limited to the 2 preceding pay periods, except as required by law (e.g. Workers' Compensation) or court order.
- 8.055** Except for certain qualified changes under the County's Group Health and Related Benefit plan(s) and those required by law, payroll deductions are effective on the date requested by the employee or in the pay period processed by the County Auditor, whichever is later.

8.06 UNEXCUSED ABSENCES AND DISCIPLINARY SUSPENSIONS

- 8.061** Harris County is accountable to the taxpayers for spending public funds; therefore, our pay system is based on principles of public accountability that prohibit the government from paying employees unless they actually perform work or have [Paid Leave](#) available. Thus, even [Exempt Employees](#) are subject to deductions for partial-day absences.
- 8.062** Department Heads may choose whether to allow an employee to substitute Paid Leave for [Dock Time](#).
- 8.063** Department Heads may suspend employees without pay or terminate their employment for disciplinary purposes, including unexcused absences and excessive absenteeism. [Non-Exempt Employees](#) may be suspended for any period of time. Department Heads may only suspend [Exempt Employees](#) in accordance with the Salary Basis Rules below. Department Heads with questions about this policy should contact the Harris County Attorney's Office.

8.07 SALARY BASIS RULES AND SAFE HARBOR PROVISION

- 8.071** [Exempt Employees](#) are treated differently in the public sector than in the private sector with regard to certain salary deductions. Deductions may be made under the following circumstances.
- a. When an [Exempt Employee](#) does not work at all in a workweek;
 - b. When an Exempt Employee begins or ends employment in the middle of a workweek;
 - c. When an Exempt Employee is absent for personal reasons (including illness or injury) and:
 - has not asked for [Paid Leave](#);
 - has asked for Paid Leave, but the request was denied;
 - has exhausted all Paid Leave; or
 - has chosen not to use Paid Leave;
 - d. When an Exempt Employee is suspended in **increments of one full workweek** for any reason;

Section 8: Payroll Procedures, Time Reporting, and Compensation

- e. When an Exempt Employee is suspended for any period of time for violating a safety rule of major significance, including those rules relating to the prevention of serious danger in the workplace or other employees;
- f. When an Exempt Employee is suspended in **full day increments** for violating a written workplace conduct rule (other than absenteeism or performance);
- g. When an Exempt Employee takes [Unpaid Leave](#) under the Family and Medical Leave Act; and
- h. When a Department Head orders a furlough for budgetary reasons.

8.072 Harris County prohibits [Department Heads](#) from making or authorizing improper deductions from an [Exempt Employee's](#) salary. Be aware of this policy and report any improper deductions to your supervisor or to the Auditor's Office Payroll Director. We will review it and correct any mistakes. Retaliation against employees who file a report under this section is prohibited.

8.08 DUAL COUNTY EMPLOYMENT

8.081 Generally, an employee cannot work for two departments at the same time. If a department wants to hire someone who is already employed by another County Department, the Department Head must first submit a written request to Commissioners Court.

8.09 LONGEVITY PAY

8.091 Department Heads and [Regular Position Employees](#) receive Longevity Pay equal to \$60 per year for each full year of [Creditable Service](#), subject to a maximum credit of 30 years. State district court judges, masters, and referees do not receive Longevity Pay.

8.092 For purposes of determining Longevity Pay, Creditable Service is calculated on the first day of the Fiscal Year. Fractional years are not considered. Longevity Pay increases begin with the first paycheck after the beginning of the fiscal year.

8.10 SOCIAL SECURITY

8.101 The County participates in the Social Security and Medicare programs.

8.11 DISASTER AND EMERGENCY PAY

8.111 From time to time, Commissioners Court will identify extraordinary circumstances such as natural disasters, public health crisis, and other large-scale emergencies that qualify as Disasters and which trigger Disaster Pay. Under such circumstances Harris County's [Disaster Pay Policy](#) will apply.



HARRIS COUNTY

HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL



SECTION 9.

GROUP HEALTH AND RELATED BENEFITS

SECTION 9. GROUP HEALTH AND RELATED BENEFITS

9.01 HEALTH BENEFITS

The following policies apply to the Group Health and Related Benefits the County provides to employees, retirees, and eligible dependents. **The County can amend or discontinue benefits at any time.**

9.011 Eligibility

9.0111 Department Heads and [Regular Position Employees](#) are eligible for these benefits.

Benefits begin on the first day of the pay period following 45 days of continuous employment as a Regular Position Employee unless the insurance policy(ies) in effect at the time specify a different period.

Example: Lauren starts work on June 2nd. She reaches 45 days of continuous employment on July 16th. Therefore, she is eligible for Group Health and Related Benefits on the first day of the pay period following July 16th.

9.0112 Eligibility for elected and appointed officials begins on the first day of the pay period following 45 days in office, unless the elected or appointed official was insured by the County as an active employee on the day before the first day of the official's term or first day in office.

9.0113 Employees hired from other entities that are covered under Harris County's group health plans and were enrolled in the County's group health plans while working for those entities are not subject to a waiting period.

9.0114 Enrollment in the County's Benefits Plan is a condition of employment and is mandatory for all employees. Only newly hired employees who are eligible for Medicare or are currently enrolled in TRICARE as a retiree or active reservist in the United States military may waive their benefits upon initial enrollment. Please contact your Human Resources office to obtain a waiver of employee health and related benefits.

9.0115 If a newly hired employee is a covered dependent of a parent or spouse on the Plan, eligibility under that Plan as a dependent ends once their own benefits go into effect. Under no circumstances may an employee be covered on both Plans, as they must use their own.

9.012 Dependents

9.0121 Eligible dependents may include your spouse, children, grandchildren, or others who meet the eligibility requirements as listed in the Employee Benefits Guide. You may enroll eligible dependents for coverage under certain Group Health and Related Benefits plan(s). The effective date of dependent coverage is your effective eligibility date or the “Insurance Begin Date” set by the County Auditor.

9.0122 Covered retirees may be eligible to continue coverage for dependents who were covered at the time of Retirement. **After that, retirees may not add dependents without a qualifying family status change. Upon a retiree’s death, coverage for all covered dependents will terminate.**

9.013 Retirees

Employees who retire in accordance with the provisions of the TCDRS (including disability Retirement) and who were covered as active employees under the Group Health and Related Benefits plan(s) in effect at the time of Retirement may be eligible to retain certain benefits coverage(s). Employees who receive Retirement benefits within 4 months of separation are eligible to retain certain Group Health and Related Benefits coverage(s) if they chose COBRA coverage for the period between their separation and retirement.

9.014 COBRA

Continuation of certain Group Health and Related Benefits is available to covered employees and their dependents upon separation of employment and other qualifying events under the provisions of Title X of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985, Public Law 99-272 (COBRA), including applicable regulations, amendments, and conversion rights of the policy(ies) and plan(s) in force. Eligible employees, retirees, and dependents should refer to provider materials and relevant publications and notices by the County for further information.

9.015 Contributions

We may require employees or retirees to pay a portion of premiums for coverage for themselves or their dependents. Employees on [Unpaid Leave](#) and all retirees must make premium payments to the County. For direct questions about billing, please contact the Human Resources & Talent Department, Benefits & Wellness Division.

9.016 Benefits

Benefits are provided subject to the policy(ies) and plan(s) in force and applicable federal, state, and local laws regulating insurance and employee benefit plans. We the right to offer alternative coverage(s) to retirees or their dependents. To obtain additional information about the current benefit plan(s) please contact the [Human Resources & Talent Department, Benefits & Wellness Division](#).

9.02 VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY, ENROLLMENT PERIODS, AND CHANGES TO COVERAGE

9.021 Verification of Eligibility

Employees and Retirees must submit the documentation outlined below to add eligible dependents to their Group Health and Related Benefits coverage(s).

- Spouse – a filed Marriage License or Certificate of Informal Marriage.
- Biological child, Legal Custody, or Guardianship – a Birth Certificate or court documents listing the employee as the parent of the child, showing permanent legal guardianship, or permanent legal custody. Verification of Birth Facts accepted only up to the age of five (5).
- Grandchildren – Certification of Financial Dependency form as required by the Group Health and Related Benefits provider and Birth Certificates of the child and grandchild to prove the required relationships. Grandchildren must be related to the employee by either birth or adoption (cannot be a step-grandchild).
- Foster child - Foster care placement agreement between the employee and Texas Department of Family & Protective Services or its subcontractor.
- Adopted child – Certified copy of a court order or paperwork placing child in the employee's home.
- Disabled children age 26 and over - Contact Human Resources & Talent Department, Benefits & Wellness to obtain the forms you and the doctor will complete and return to Aetna. A determination for your request to continue coverage will be communicated by Aetna to you and Harris County.

9.022 Enrollment Periods

9.0221 The County provides an initial enrollment period for newly eligible employees to select from among certain coverage options for themselves and to elect or decline coverage for eligible dependents.

9.0222 We also provide open enrollment periods as required by law. If an annual open enrollment period is provided, you may add or drop dependents and make changes to plan selections then. *Retirees may only change benefit plan selections during open enrollment periods.*

9.023 Changes to Coverage Outside Open Enrollment Periods

Other than during an open enrollment period, employees may only add or drop dependents or make changes to their Flexible Spending Account contributions if a **qualifying change in family status** occurs as defined in the policy(ies) and under the law. Retirees may drop dependents at any time but may only add dependents within the same calendar year of a qualifying change in family status, unless the Life Event occurs in December, at which time you have thirty (30) days to add dependents.

9.0231 Adding Dependents

To add dependents, you must complete a Life Event online in STARS, including uploading the appropriate documentation, within **the same calendar year of a qualifying change in family status**. Due to security concerns, STARS can only be accessed from within the Harris County network. The coverage is effective the start of the following pay period in which the Life Event is approved.

9.0232 Adding Newborns

The effective date of dependent coverage for a newborn is the date of birth if you complete a Life Event in STARS, including uploading the appropriate documentation **within 31 days of the birth**. Otherwise, the coverage is effective the start of the following pay period in which the Life Event is approved.

9.0233 Terminating or Dropping Dependent Coverage

Following a qualifying change in family status, an employee must complete a Life Event in STARS, including uploading the appropriate documentation **during the same calendar year in which the event took place, unless the event occurs in December, at which time you have thirty (30) days to drop dependents**. The coverage is terminated at the end of the pay period in which the Life Event is approved.

Changes in dependent coverage are not allowed if the qualifying change in family status occurred prior to January 1 of the current calendar year except in cases of a newborn reported within 31 days of birth, dependent ineligibility, or death.

9.024 Termination Of Coverage

9.0241 4 - Week Rule

Except as required by law, employees compensated for less than 32 hours per week for 4 consecutive weeks lose eligibility for Group Health and Related Benefits but are eligible to elect COBRA benefits. (See § 9.014 regarding COBRA). *Employees who lose coverage under this section and do not choose COBRA coverage are subject to a new waiting period if they later become eligible for Group Health and Related Benefits.*

9.0242 Separation of Employment

Employees who separate employment with the County lose coverage on the last date of the pay period following their separation date.

9.0243 Failure to Pay

Employees and retirees who fail to pay premium contributions lose their Group Health and Related Benefits. Unless the employee is returning from FMLA leave, **benefits are not reinstated until past due premiums are paid in full.**

9.0244 Fraud or Misrepresentation

Anyone who commits fraud or makes misrepresentations about the use of Group Health and Related Benefits loses coverage as outlined in the respective benefit plan documents. Further, the County will report all suspected cases of fraud to the District Attorney. To obtain additional information about Group Health and Related Benefits, please contact the Human Resources & Talent Department, Benefits & Wellness Division.

9.03 EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

9.031 We have an employee assistance program (EAP) available to you or any member of your household. The EAP offers confidential consultation and counseling services to employees and members of your household who are experiencing problems at work or at home. Some of these problems may include, but are not limited to: family, marital, alcohol/drug abuse, emotional distress, job-related, legal, or financial difficulties.

There are three types of referrals:

- **Self-referral:** You can contact the EAP on your own by calling the number listed in your [Employee Benefits' Guide](#).
- **Informal referral:** Your supervisor, a co-worker, family member, or community professional may recommend or suggest that you call the EAP.
- **Formal referral:** If the issue is affecting your work, your department may require you to call the EAP and comply with any recommendations the EAP makes.

Refer to your Employee Benefits' Guide for more information.

9.04 RETIREMENT

The County is a member of the Texas County and District Retirement System ([TCDRS](#)). Obtain additional information regarding TCDRS from the Human Resources & Talent Department.

9.041 Commissioners Court determines the amount of employee and employer contributions to TCDRS. [TCDRS](#) calculates and pays Retirement benefits.

9.042 All employees except those in [Temporary Positions](#) must make contributions to TCDRS.

Department Heads are prohibited from creating re-employment agreements with employees. You must not have any expectation, understanding, or agreement that you will be rehired by any Harris County department after retiring.

- **The IRS requires the employment separation be bona fide.**
- **Even when no prohibited agreement exists, TCDRS requires at least one full calendar month to pass before a retiree or former employee who has withdrawn their TCDRS account may be re-hired.**

9.043 Employees who want to retire must submit a completed retirement application packet online at <http://www.TCDRS.org> in advance of the proposed effective date of retirement. The effective date of retirement is the last day of the month.

9.05 DEFERRED COMPENSATION/457 SAVINGS PLAN

The County offers a 457(b) plan, which is a savings plan for eligible employees. The plan is similar to a 401(k) plan. You may choose to defer a specific amount of your paycheck on a pre-tax or after-tax basis through payroll deduction. The taxes on eligible pre-tax contributions are deferred until withdrawal, as well as the taxes on any investment earnings from these contributions. The 457(b) plan is a great way to supplement your retirement. Refer to your [Employee Benefits' Guide](#) for more information.

9.06 WORKERS' COMPENSATION

The County provides Workers' Compensation benefits for accidents, illnesses, or injuries employees sustain in the course and scope of employment in accordance with the existing Texas Workers' Compensation laws.

9.061 You must report any on-the-job accident, illness, or injury to your immediate supervisor or designated department officer within 24 hours of the occurrence. The supervisor or designated officer must then forward the notice to the Office of Management & Budget, Risk Management Division immediately. Failure to report an on-the-job accident, illness, or injury in a timely manner may result in the loss of or denial of Workers' Compensation benefits.

9.062 Workers' Compensation benefits are subject to any deductions required by law or by court order (e.g., child support payments). Employees are responsible for making arrangements for payment of any voluntary payroll deductions.

9.063 Employees, except for certain law enforcement officers, must use available Sick Leave, Vacation Leave, and Compensatory Time during the first 7 calendar days of lost time for a compensable injury. After 7 calendar

days, the department must code the employee's absences as Workers' Compensation.

- 9.064** If an employee is eligible for FMLA leave and the Workers' Compensation injury is a Serious Health Condition under the FMLA, the department simultaneously designates the Workers' Compensation absences as FMLA leave.

Employees do not receive Paid Leave or accrue Sick Leave while on Workers' Compensation leave except during the first 7 calendar days if they have available Paid Leave.

- 9.065** Employees who return to work for their regularly scheduled hours must use available Paid Leave for time off for doctor's appointments or any other follow-up treatment related to the compensable injury.

To obtain additional information regarding Workers' Compensation benefits, please contact the Office of Management & Budget, Risk Management Division.



HARRIS COUNTY | HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL



SECTION 10. EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

SECTION 10. EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

To be paid for absences such as, but not limited to, those described below, you will have to use available Vacation Leave, Compensatory Time, Sick Leave (only if appropriate), or Floating Holiday(s). *If you miss work in these situations, even with your supervisor's approval, but do not have any appropriate Paid Leave, you will likely be docked.* Under certain circumstances, you may be allowed to work from home. Or if you miss work, your department may (or may not) allow you to make up the missed time.

You should save a reasonable amount of paid leave for personal emergencies or natural disasters.

10.01 DANGEROUS WEATHER AND DISASTERS

10.011 We provide important services for the people of Harris County on a daily basis. During disasters some of these services are critical, including emergency communications and rescue and recovery operations. Your department should have a plan for dangerous weather events. Some employees will be required to work before, during, and after a disaster to keep operations functioning. Others might be needed to support those essential operations. During those times, your job duties and where you perform them will likely change. Still others may be instructed to stay home and check in with their supervisors.

10.012 Know what your department plan is **before** an emergency, including whether you will be required to report to work during a disaster. Make sure you have discussed your role with your supervisor. If you are required to report to work during a disaster, you need to have plans (and back-up plans) for getting to your emergency work location and for taking care of your family, your home, and your pets. Update those plans frequently and discuss them with your supervisor.

10.013 When authorized by Commissioners Court, eligible employees assigned to perform disaster-related duties before, during, or after a qualifying disaster or emergency event may be eligible to receive Disaster Pay. Commissioners Court will identify Disasters triggering authorized Disaster Pay pursuant to the Disaster Pay Policy. Non-exempt employees will be compensated for overtime in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), and exempt employees may receive straight-time compensation for hours worked in excess of 40 hours in an authorized workweek, in lieu of compensatory time, as permitted by County policy. Disaster Pay does not apply to planned or scheduled events, Department Heads are not eligible, and employees must accurately record eligible time and maintain required documentation.

[Disaster Pay](#) is authorized solely at the discretion of Commissioners Court, may be amended or discontinued at any time, and does not supersede applicable federal or state law.

10.02 BUILDING EMERGENCIES

If something happens that makes it unbearable for employees to remain at work or to function effectively, like the air conditioner or heater stops working, your supervisor may let you leave work. If you do not have appropriate Paid Leave to cover the absence or work to do from home, you will be docked.



HARRIS COUNTY | HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL



SECTION 11. TELEWORK

SECTION 11. TELEWORK

The Telework Policy is established to define Harris County's expectations for employees authorized to work at locations other than County facilities. Harris County supports teleworking as an alternative work arrangement and allows Department Heads to implement telework arrangements, where appropriate, for eligible employees. The Telework Policy promotes telework as a means of achieving solutions to administrative efficiencies such as office space and parking limitations, enhancing alignment with Harris County's Strategic Plan Objective to reduce emissions, creating an atmosphere for employees to increase productivity and job satisfaction, and sustaining the hiring and retention of a highly qualified workforce by enhancing work/life integration.

No employee is entitled to, or guaranteed the opportunity to, telework. Offering the opportunity to telework is a management option, based on the discretion of the employee's immediate supervisor and Department Head. Department Heads have a right to refuse to make telework available and to terminate a telework arrangement at any time.

- 11.01** Harris County departments may implement telework arrangements, where appropriate, for eligible employees in recognition of the positive personal and management impacts of such arrangements, including limited office space, parking, and increased workplace flexibility. When appropriate, telework arrangements afford a flexible work option when both the employee and the work to be performed are suited to such an arrangement. Telework is not appropriate for all positions and/or employees.

11.011 TERMS OF TELEWORK PARTICIPATION

- 11.0111** Employees approved to telework are expected to meet all the responsibilities, perform all the duties, and comply with all the policies that apply to any employee in a similar role, regardless of the location.
- 11.0112** Offering the opportunity to telework is a management option, based on the discretion of the employee's immediate supervisor and the Department Head approval. Department Heads have a right to refuse to make telework available and to terminate a telework arrangement at any time.
- 11.0113** Employees are prohibited from working extra employment or conducting any unauthorized external (non-County) work while they are scheduled to telework.

- 11.0114** Employees should not work telework from outside the greater Houston area unless agreed upon by their Department Head. Due to varying state tax implications and employment laws, employees should only perform job functions while in the State of Texas. Employees that work in a department that reports to the Office of County Administrator are prohibited from performing telework outside of the State of Texas. Temporary remote work while traveling for business or personal reasons may be permitted under specific conditions outlined in the telework agreement and approved in advance by their Department Head.

Violation of the "Telework Policy" may lead to disciplinary actions up to and including termination of the teleworker's employment with Harris County.

11.012 TELEWORK ELIGIBILITY

Department Heads should ensure the following eligibility standards are followed when considering the suitability of a telework agreement:

- 11.0121** To be eligible for telework, employees must have completed at least 30 days of continuous employment with Harris County.
- 11.0122** The employee must hold a job that the department has determined is suitable to be performed away from a Harris County office or official worksite. Teleworkers must have a portion of their workload that can be performed away from the office without diminishing the quality of customer service or the overall productivity of the department. Employees whose job tasks are restricted by location will not be approved to telework.
- 11.0123** An employee's work must be of a nature that in-person interaction with internal or external customers or project workgroups is minimal and the employee's tasks can be performed successfully away from the office.
- 11.0124** If approved for telework, the employee must maintain adequate performance levels. Telework does not alter requirements to comply with an employee's duties and responsibilities and County and department policies.
- 11.0125** The employee must review and sign the Telework Acknowledgment Form within this policy.

11.02 AD HOC ARRANGEMENTS

Temporary telework arrangements may be approved for circumstances such as inclement weather, special projects or business travel. These arrangements are approved on an as needed basis only, with no expectation of ongoing continuance. All informal telework arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the business needs of the department.

11.03 WORK SCHEDULE AND TIME REPORTING

- 11.031** All teleworkers must accurately report time worked in accordance with the Harris County Personnel Policies & Procedures and obtain authorization by the employee's supervisor or Department Head prior to working any hours beyond their normal work schedule.
- 11.032** Employees participating in telework must adhere to their regularly assigned work schedule. Any deviations from the assigned schedule must be pre-approved by their supervisor. All overtime and compensatory time should be approved by management before being accrued. Employees are expected to manage their work hours to avoid excessive overtime.
- 11.033** Employees that telework must follow their department's call-in and leave request procedures. Personal leave time must be arranged in the same manner as employees working at an official County worksite. Teleworkers who are unable to work due to illness, must use sick leave or other paid leave and report their absence to their supervisor as soon as practicable.
- 11.034** Employees are accountable for their time and are expected to be regularly accessible and available to their supervisors and coworkers during their telework schedule using routine electronic means, including telephone, email, Microsoft Teams, and Skype.
- 11.035** Teleworkers understand that they may be called to work in an official county worksite/office on their regular telework schedule to meet department needs. Employees should be available to attend in person meetings or report to an official county worksite/office when requested.
- 11.036** Employees are strictly prohibited from engaging in secondary employment or operating personal businesses during their designated telework hours. Any violation of this prohibition will result in immediate termination of telework privileges and may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

11.04 CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

- 11.041** As a general rule, confidential and/or proprietary information may not leave County premises. If it is necessary for data to be downloaded or transported to be used off-site, employees must obtain approval of their supervisor and inform them of the methods being used to safeguard the information.
- 11.042** Employees must maintain the confidentiality of County information and documents, prevent unauthorized access to any County system or information, and dispose of work-related documents in a manner that will not jeopardize the interests of the County.
- 11.043** Failure to use due care in safeguarding confidential and/or proprietary information in all phases of possession (transportation, use, storage, and disposal) may be considered a performance matter that could end the telework agreement and subject the employee to disciplinary action.

Refer to the [Harris County Telework Policy](#) for more information.



HARRIS COUNTY

HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL



SECTION 12.

TIME OFF AND LEAVES OF ABSENCE

SECTION 12. TIME OFF & LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Harris County provides employees with several forms of Paid Leave described below. Employees may not take Paid Leave until they have worked at least one day. You should save a reasonable amount of Paid Leave for personal emergencies or natural disasters. You may not take more than 40 hours of Paid Leave in one workweek.

Department Heads have discretion to adopt policies prohibiting employees from performing any outside work or engaging in any extra-duty employment while out on sick and family medical leave.

12.01 OVERTIME COMPENSATION AND COMPENSATORY TIME

Based on available budgeted funds allocated for [Overtime](#) compensation, [Non-Exempt](#) employees are compensated for [Hours Actually Worked](#) in accordance with applicable law. In lieu of cash payment for Overtime, [Compensatory Time](#) may be allowed.

12.011 Earning Compensatory Time

12.0111 When cash payment is not made for [Overtime](#), [Non-Exempt Employees](#) accrue 1.5 hours of [Compensatory Time](#) for each hour worked over 40 hours in one workweek. [Exempt Employees](#) accrue 1 hour of [Compensatory Time](#) for each hour worked over 40 hours in one workweek.

12.0112 If the combination of any employee's [Paid Absences](#) and [Hours Actually Worked](#) exceeds 40 hours in one workweek, the employee accrues Compensatory Time on a straight time, hour-for-hour basis for each hour over 40.

The Compensatory Time balance must not exceed 240 hours and is carried forward indefinitely. Department Heads may limit the amount of Compensatory Time you accrue by ensuring that you do not work more than 40 hours in one workweek. Department Heads may also force employees to use any part of the Compensatory Time balance for budgetary reasons, including to avoid paying cash for Overtime.

12.0113 Employees are prohibited from accruing Negative Compensatory Time.

12.012 Compensatory Time Limits

12.0121 If a Non-exempt Employee's Compensatory Time balance reaches 240 hours, the employee will be paid cash for all hours worked beyond 240.

12.0122 If an Exempt Employee's Compensatory Time balance reaches 240 hours, the employee will not accumulate any more Compensatory Time regardless of the number of hours worked until the balance is reduced. Exempt Employees are not compensated for Overtime other than the accumulation of 240 hours of Compensatory Time. To maintain accurate County records, exempt employees who have exceeded the maximum compensatory time accrual limit must still record all the hours they actually worked on their timesheets.

12.013 Using Compensatory Time

12.0131 An employee's request to use Compensatory Time is subject to the Department Head's approval and must not unduly disrupt the operation of the department.

12.0132 Department Heads may compel employees to use any part of their Compensatory Time balance for budgetary reasons and for the best interest of the department.

12.0133 When employees who have both non-exempt and exempt Compensatory Time balances use Compensatory Time, the Compensatory Time used will be deducted from the non-exempt balance first.

12.014 Final Payment of Compensatory Time Balance

12.0141 When you leave the County:

- Any balance of Compensatory Time you earned as a [Non-Exempt Employee](#) gets paid based on your final regular rate of pay or in accordance with applicable law.
- Half of any balance of Compensatory Time you earned as an [Exempt Employee](#) gets paid based on your final regular rate of pay.

12.0142 Employees who become a [Department Head](#) by election, appointment, ratification by Commissioners Court, or designation by the County Administrator, receive final payment of their Compensatory Time balance within 30 days of their election, appointment, ratification, or designation in accordance with §12.0141.

- 12.0143** If you leave your job and get re-hired by the County without a [Break in Employment](#), you will not get paid for any Compensatory Time balance. The balance will transfer to your new department.

You must work at least one pay period for the new department before using any available paid leave. **Employees who leave one department to accept a position in another department without a break in Employment keep their Compensatory Time balance.**

12.02 HOLIDAYS

Each year Commissioners Court approves the paid Holidays for the next calendar year. Once on [Active Duty](#), [Regular Position Employees](#) are paid for Holidays subject to the restrictions below.

- 12.021** All Regular Position Employees will receive 8 hours of holiday pay regardless of their schedule.
- 12.022** Employees who work on the Holiday will be compensated for the Hours Actually Worked plus the Holiday hours.

Example: John, a Regular Position Employee, is scheduled to work 10 hours per day Monday through Thursday. Monday is a Holiday. If John is a non-exempt employee, he must make up the other two hours during the same workweek either by working or posting Vacation Leave or Compensatory Time. Departments may allow or require employees who usually work four ten-hour days to convert to five eight-hour days for that week.

12.023 Floating Holiday

- 12.0231** If Commissioners Court approves a Floating Holiday (8 hours), then Regular Position employees may take that Floating Holiday on any working day during the Payroll Year subject to the Department Head's discretion.
- 12.0232** An employee may carry two unused Floating Holidays (16 hours) over to the next Payroll Year. An employee will never have more than three Floating Holidays (24 hours) available.

Employees are strongly urged to reserve Floating Holidays for inclement weather and natural disasters.

- 12.0233** Floating Holidays may be taken in increments.

12.0234 Department Heads may adopt internal policies about scheduling the Floating Holiday, including denying requests that were not pre-scheduled and pre-approved, prohibiting employees from using their Floating Holiday until they have worked some minimum amount of time, and requiring employees to schedule the time off around business needs.

12.0235 An employee who resigns and goes to work for another County department does not get a new Floating Holiday until the next Payroll Year. Unused Floating Holidays follow an employee who changes departments without a Break in Employment. Employees who resign and return with a break in service do not get a new floating holiday until the next payroll year.

12.0236 Only Regular Position Employees receive floating holidays. Regular Position Employees who move to a Part time or Temporary Position within the same department or another County department without a Break in Service forfeit any Floating Holiday balances that are not used before being moved to a Part Time or Temporary Position.

12.03 VACATION LEAVE

The County provides Vacation Leave for all [Regular Position Employees](#). Vacation Leave accrues at the rates and to the maximums in this table.

Years of Continuous Employment as a Regular Position Employee		Accrual Per Payroll Week	Maximum Vacation Leave Accrual During the Calendar Year	Maximum Balance
At Least	Less Than			
New Hire to	5 Years	1.54 Hours	10 Days/80 Hours	280 Hours
5 Years	15 Years	2.31 Hours	15 Days/120 Hours	280 Hours
15 Years	25 Years	3.08 Hours	20 Days/160 Hours	280 Hours
25 Years		3.85 Hours	25 Days/200 Hours	280 Hours

12.031 You can only take vacation on normally scheduled workdays and must get prior approval in accordance with department policy. Department Heads can adopt policies about scheduling Vacation Leave, including denying requests that were not pre-scheduled and pre-approved, prohibiting employees from using Vacation Leave until they have worked some minimum amount of time, and requiring employees to schedule vacations around business needs.

12.032 Employees who become a Department Head by election, appointment or ratification by Commissioners Court or designation by the County Administrator, get paid any Vacation Leave balance within 30 days of their election, appointment or ratification or designation. Department Heads who become a Regular Position Employee with no Break in Employment will receive credit for the years they served as a Department Head in determining their vacation accrual rate.

12.033 [Regular Position Employees](#) who move to a Part Time or Temporary Position within the same department or another County department without a Break in Service forfeit their Vacation Leave balances. Be sure to use your vacation before you move. Employees who forfeited their prior Vacation Leave balance when they moved to a Part Time or Temporary Position get their prior vacation balances restored if they become a [Regular Position Employee](#) again without a Break in Service.

12.04 SICK LEAVE

12.041 The County provides all [Regular Position Employees](#) with Paid Sick Leave for absences due to personal illness, personal injury, or an appointment with a health care provider, as that term is defined in FMLA § 12.1314. ***You must not work another job during the hours you miss work because you are sick or claim Family Sick and Wellness Leave.***

12.042 Regular Position Employees accrue Sick Leave at a rate of 4 hours per pay period. The maximum accrual is 720 hours/90 days.

12.043 Sick Leave can be taken the pay period after an employee is hired subject to the employee's department's internal policies and procedures.

12.044 Wellness Leave

12.0441 Wellness Leave is available to Regular, Full-Time employees. This policy does not apply to employees that receive paid Mental Health Leave pursuant to Texas Government Code, Chapter 614.015 or frontline employees who receive paid Mental Health Leave approved by Commissioners Court on November 15, 2022. Eligible employees may use up to 24 hours of Wellness Leave per Calendar Year to support their mental, emotional or psychological well-being. Wellness Leave is deducted from the employee's Sick Leave balance. Unused Wellness Leave is non-compensable and will not be paid upon separation of employment.

12.045 Family Sick and Wellness Leave

12.0451 Employees may use up to 120 hours of Sick Leave per Calendar Year to care for an Immediate Family Member who is sick or to seek preventative or routine health care for themselves or an Immediate Family Member. Family Sick and Wellness Leave is deducted from the employee's Sick Leave balance.

- 12.0452** For immediate family members not on the employee's insurance, proof of family relationship may also be required, e.g. birth certificates, a marriage certificate, a court order, photos, a certification form, or a combination thereof. If the Family Sick Leave also qualifies for FMLA, a completed FMLA certification may be sufficient.
- 12.046** You should tell your supervisor as soon as practicable when taking Sick Leave or Family Sick and Wellness Leave.
- 12.047** To substantiate a request for a non-FMLA qualifying reason, Department Heads may require you to provide a statement of a health care provider for any period of Sick Leave, including Family Sick and Wellness Leave.
- 12.048** If you use Sick Leave or Family Sick and Wellness Leave for 4 or more consecutive workdays, you *must* give your department a health care provider's statement indicating the onset and duration of the illness. Otherwise, you will not be allowed to use Sick Leave or Family Sick and Wellness Leave for the 4th day. Department Heads must determine whether the absence is FMLA qualifying as soon as possible.
- 12.049** If you do not submit a healthcare provider's statement timely, you may not take Sick Leave or Family Sick and Wellness Leave for the period.
- 12.050** Employees who have a [Break in Employment](#) forfeit all accrued Sick Leave. [Regular Position Employees](#) who move to a Part Time or Temporary Position within the same department or another County department without a Break in Employment forfeit their Sick Leave balances. Employees who forfeited their prior Sick Leave balances when they moved to a Part Time or Temporary Position get their prior Sick Leave balances restored if they become a [Regular Position Employee](#) again without a Break in Employment. Department Heads who forfeited their Sick Leave balances when they became Department Heads get their prior Sick Leave balances restored if they become a [Regular Position Employee](#) again without a Break in Employment.

12.05 SICK LEAVE POOL

The purpose of the Sick Leave Pool Program is to alleviate the financial, health and emotional hardship caused when a Catastrophic Injury or Illness forces an employee to exhaust all accrued paid leave and subsequently lose compensation and benefits from Harris County.

12.051 Eligibility

To participate in the program, including contributing to, and receiving benefits from the Pool, [Regular Position Employees](#) must have been continuously employed by the County for at least twelve (12) months immediately preceding participation in the program.

12.0511 Participation in the program ceases once an employee is no longer in a Regular Position.

12.052 Donations

Upon eligibility, an employee may donate between a minimum of eight (8) hours to a maximum of forty (40) hours of Sick Leave and/or Vacation Leave to the Pool each Fiscal Year during enrollment period(s). The donation cannot cause the employee's combined Sick Leave or Vacation Leave balance to fall below forty (40) hours.

Donations to the Pool are strictly voluntary.

12.0521 Time donated to the Pool is irrevocable and is not designated to any particular employee. Donation to the Pool is not a guarantee that an employee will receive any Catastrophic Leave from the Pool.

12.0522 When an eligible employee voluntarily or involuntarily separates employment from the County, the employee may donate up to an additional ten (10) days (80 hours) of combined Sick and Vacation Leave hours to take effect immediately before the effective date of separation.

12.053 Catastrophic Leave Requests

12.0531 Catastrophic Leave is defined as a "Serious Health Condition" as defined under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) in Section 12.1317 of the Harris County Personnel Policies and Procedures. FMLA defines a serious health condition as an illness, injury, impairment, condition that involves or (A) inpatient physical or mental care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility; or (B) continuing treatment by a health care provider.

12.0532 A Serious Health Condition includes ailments such as, but not limited to, cancer, myocardial infarction, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, chronic kidney disease and injuries from accidents, including motor vehicle accidents. Incapacity or disability related to pregnancy is considered a serious health condition (does not apply to bonding time after pregnancy). Catastrophic Leave requests for stress-related illness, including mental distress and depression, may only be granted for hospitalization.

12.0533 Only eligible employees are permitted to request and receive Catastrophic Leave from the Pool for their own serious health condition. Catastrophic Leave cannot be used to care for a family member.

- 12.0534** Employees who are placed on an approved leave of absence or who are receiving Workers' Compensation indemnity benefits are not eligible to receive Catastrophic Leave from the Pool.
- 12.0535** The employee must have a Catastrophic Injury or Illness and must have exhausted all accrued paid leave and compensatory time before receiving Catastrophic Leave from the Pool. The employee must be absent at least ten (10) continuous workdays before receiving Catastrophic Leave from the Pool.
- 12.0536** The maximum amount of Catastrophic Leave that can be given to an employee in a rolling twelve (12) month period is the lesser of:
- The number of hours needed to cover the employee's absence due to the Catastrophic Injury or Illness,
 - **Sixty (60) workdays (480 hours)** for employees who donated to the Pool for the fiscal year or **twenty (20) work days (160 hours)** for employees who did not donate to the Pool for the fiscal year, or
 - One-third of the total amount of time in the Pool.
- 12.0537** Catastrophic Leave will be administered on a first-come, first-serve basis, determined by the date or time when all necessary information has been provided. If there are not enough hours available in the Pool to cover requests for Catastrophic Leave, employees who donated to the Pool during the fiscal year will be given preference. The Administrator determines eligibility and the amount of Catastrophic Leave given. All decisions by the Administrator are final.
- 12.0538** Catastrophic Leave is treated for all purposes as if the employee were absent on Sick Leave. All Catastrophic Leave will be designated as FMLA leave.
- 12.0539** All unused Catastrophic Leave granted to the employee shall be returned to the Pool under any of the following conditions:
- The employee returns to work full-time;
 - The employee voluntarily or involuntarily separates employment with the County;
 - The employee becomes deceased. An estate of a deceased employee is not entitled to payment for unused Catastrophic Leave acquired by the employee from the Pool. If an eligible employee's request has been submitted but not finalized prior to the employee's death, through no fault of the employee, the request may continue to be processed pending further review.

- The employee voluntarily cancels their participation in the Program; or
- The employee violates this policy and/or commits fraud or misrepresentation in the request or use of Catastrophic Leave.

12.054 Coordination with Other Benefits

12.0541 An employee is no longer permitted to receive or use Catastrophic Leave when they begin receiving Workers' Compensation indemnity benefits, long-term disability benefits, Social Security disability benefits, or any other supplemental benefits.

12.0542 An employee receiving Catastrophic Leave may not perform any outside work or engage in any extra duty employment while using Catastrophic Leave.

12.06 JURY AND WITNESS DUTY

12.061 [Regular Position Employees](#) are eligible for paid leave if they are appointed to serve on a grand jury or are required by court order or subpoena to serve on a jury or appear as a witness in a federal, state, county, or municipal court on a day and during the hours that you are normally scheduled to work. **Tell your supervisor as soon as possible after getting a jury summons or a witness subpoena.**

To qualify for Jury or Witness Duty pay, you must tell your supervisor each day you are scheduled to go to court and provide documentation from the court confirming the date(s) and time(s) you were there.

12.062 If you do not serve the entire day, you may return to work. The time spent driving from the courthouse directly to the worksite counts as Jury or Witness Duty. If you do not go to work, you are only paid for the hours you actually spent in court.

12.063 Employees may be paid up to 8 hours per day for Jury or Witness Duty. If the combination of Jury/Witness Duty and Hours Actually Worked exceeds more than 8 hours, decrease the Jury/Witness Duty hours on your timesheet so the combined total hours equal 8 hours for that day.

Example: Rachel reports for Jury Duty at 8 a.m. She is released at 12 p.m. and drives straight to work, arriving at 12:30 p.m. She works 12:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. She first records 12:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. (5.5 hours) as work time and then records 2.5 hours as Jury Duty.

12.064 Give a copy of your official supporting documentation and the statement from the court to your payroll clerk with your timesheet.

12.065 You do not get Witness Duty pay for:

- appearing in court as a plaintiff or a defendant;
- appearing as a prospective witness on a personal matter; or
- testifying as an expert.

12.066 You can keep any fees you get for serving on a jury or grand jury. If you use Witness Duty on your timesheet, you have to give all subpoena or witness fees you receive to the County Treasurer.

12.067 If you testify in a case as a fact witness or an expert witness about your official duties, record that on your timesheet as [Hours Actually Worked](#). You may not get paid from any other source.

12.07 MILITARY LEAVE

We are extremely proud of our employees who serve in the military.

12.071 Reservists should tell their supervisors about their regular monthly training for the year as soon as they know it.

12.072 If you are ordered into active military service, you will get the employment and re-employment benefits granted by federal and state laws. Give your written duty orders to your Department Head or Department HR person as soon as possible.

12.073 Employees must provide their department with advance notice of military service. This notice may be provided by the employee or by an appropriate officer of the military branch in which the employee will be serving.

12.074 USERRA guarantees an employee returning from qualifying military service or training the right to be reemployed if the length of service does not cause the absence to exceed 5-years and other conditions have been met. Departments should contact human resources if service will exceed 5-years or the employee has a disqualifying event, as some exceptions may apply.

12.075 Service members are permitted to use vacation leave that had accrued before the beginning of their military service instead of unpaid leave. However, service members cannot be forced to use vacation time for military service and may elect to be in DOCK status.

Military Leave is not limited to six months like a regular LOA.

12.076 Temporary Military Leave

Pursuant to Texas Government Code Ann. §437.202, members of the state military forces, a reserve component of the U.S. armed forces, or a state or federally authorized urban search and rescue team may take a Temporary Military Leave *with pay* on a day they are regularly scheduled to work but are engaged in authorized training or duty ordered or authorized by a proper authority. **Temporary Military Leave does not exceed 15 days or 120 hours per federal fiscal year (October 1 - September 30).**

12.077 The County provides up to an additional seven (7) workdays in a federal fiscal year if a qualifying employee is called up to state active duty by the governor or another appropriate authority in response to a disaster. To receive the extra seven (7) days or 56 hours, the department will need to submit a request to the Human Resources & Talent Department's, Central HR STARS Helpdesk team requesting the additional hours be added to the employee's military leave balance.

12.08 PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

Harris County proudly promotes a family-friendly workplace by providing paid leave to eligible employees to bond and care for a child after the birth, adoption, or placement of a child for adoption.

12.081 The Rolling 12 – Month Period in this section is defined as a period of 12 consecutive months on a rolling basis, with a new 12-month period starting after the exhaustion of the employee's previous approved Paid Parental Leave or the last day the employee used Paid Parental Leave.

12.082 Eligibility

12.0821 To be eligible for Paid Parental Leave and Infant Sick Leave employees must meet the following criteria:

- Be a full-time, Regular Position Employee (part-time and temporary employees are not eligible); and
- Been continuously employed with the County as a full-time, regular employee for at least 45 consecutive calendar days immediately preceding the birth, adoption, or placement for adoption. For purposes of this policy placement for adoption means foster-to-adopt placement or other placement of a child pending adoption as evidenced by a placement agreement or court action.

In addition, employees must meet one of the following criteria:

- Be a new parent by birth of a child;

- Be the new adoptive parent of a child who is 17 years or younger; or
- Be the foster parent to a new foster-to-adopt child who is 17 years or younger and placed with the foster parent; or
- Be the prospective parent to a child who is 17 years or younger and who is placed with the prospective parent pending private adoption.

This policy applies to a child that is newly added to the household through birth, adoption, or placement for adoption and not a child who has been a member of the household for over a year. This policy also does not apply to the adoption of a stepchild by a stepparent. If both parents work for Harris County, then each employee is entitled to their own paid leave.

12.083 Amount and Use of Leave

12.0831 Starting January 14, 2023, employees who have reached 45 consecutive calendar days of employment but have not reached 180 consecutive calendar days of continuous employment immediately preceding the birth, adoption, or placement of a child for adoption may receive Paid Parental Leave as outlined in the following table.

Continuous Employment as a <u>Regular Position Employee</u>		Maximum Paid Parental Leave During Rolling 12-Month Rolling Calendar Year
At Least	Less Than	
45 Days	90 Days	3 Weeks/120 Hours
90 Days	180 Days	6 Weeks/240 Hours
180 Days		12 Weeks/480 Hours

**Employees will not receive more than the allotted maximum balance within a rolling 12 – month period starting from the exhaustion of any previous approved Paid Parental Leave.

**Births and adoptions that occurred before January 14, 2023, are eligible for a maximum of 10 weeks/400 hours of Paid Parental Leave per the previous policy.

Example: Brian is expecting a child with his significant other and has applied for Paid Parental Leave. He has been employed with the County for 45 consecutive calendar days but will not have 180 consecutive calendar days of employment before the expected birth of his child to be eligible for the maximum 12 weeks (480 hours) of Paid Parental Leave.

However, Brian will be eligible to use 120 hours of Paid Parental Leave immediately preceding the birth of his child. He may also use other available paid leave, such as accrued vacation or compensatory time, with his department head's approval for parental support purposes.

12.0832 Employees will not receive more than the maximum allotted amount of Paid Parental Leave in a rolling 12-month period starting from the exhaustion of the previous approved Paid Parental Leave or the last day the employee used Paid Parental Leave, regardless of whether more than one birth, adoption, or placement event occurs within that 12-month time frame.

Example: Kimberly adopted a child with an effective court order date of March 31, 2025. She used 10 weeks of Paid Parental Leave from June 3, 2025, to August 12, 2025. Kimberly adopted another child, with an effective court order date of May 26, 2026. Kimberly will not be eligible for Paid Parental Leave for the second adoption until August 13, 2026.

12.0833 Paid Parental Leave is an optional benefit available for child bonding purposes following the birth, adoption, or placement of a child. Employees are not required to use Paid Parental Leave; however, if they elect to use it, the leave must be taken and exhausted before other forms of paid or unpaid leave are used for child bonding purposes.

12.0834 Approved Paid Parental Leave may be taken at any time during the 12-month period immediately following the birth, adoption, or placement of a child with the employee. Paid Parental Leave may not be used or extended beyond this 12-month time frame.

12.0835 Employees must take Paid Parental Leave in one continuous period of leave unless the employee's Department Head allows the employee to use Paid Parental Leave intermittently.

12.0836 Paid Parental Leave is compensated at the employee's regular rate of pay. Any unused Paid Parental Leave is not compensable and will be forfeited at the end of the 12-month time frame or when an employee separates from employment with Harris County or moves to an ineligible position, whichever occurs first.

12.0837 Recipients of Paid Parental Leave must maintain full-time employment with Harris County for at least 180 consecutive

calendar days of continuous service immediately after the expiration of approved leave or reimburse Harris County for the Paid Parental Leave funds received. Under limited circumstances Harris County may elect to waive reimbursement, including but not limited to when the recipient of paid parental leave involuntarily loses full time employment, such as in a reduction in force.

12.0838 Harris County shall be entitled to recover from the employee any Paid Parental Leave funds received if such employee does not return to work as a full-time, [Regular Position](#) Employee for at least 180 days of continuous service after receiving Paid Parental Leave.

12.084 Requesting Paid Parental Leave

12.0841 Employees should notify their supervisor or Department Head of their intention to request Paid Parental Leave as soon as practicable and provide them with the anticipated start date and duration of the leave. **Department Heads may delay Paid Parental Leave if advanced notice of the leave is not given.**

12.0842 To receive Paid Parental Leave, eligible employees must complete a [Paid Parental Leave Request Form](#) and submit it to their department's human resources representative within thirty (30) calendar days of the birth or adoption/placement.

12.0843 The request must include appropriate documentation that shows the employee's use of Paid Parental Leave is directly connected to a birth, adoption, or placement of a child for adoption. If the employee is eligible for FMLA leave, the FMLA leave requirements will govern, and the FMLA documentation provided will be used to verify eligibility.

12.0844 If the employee is not eligible for FMLA leave, proof of the birth or placement of the child must be provided. The employee's name must be included as a legal parent on the birth certificate or legal document establishing paternity or establishing adoption/ placement.

12.0845 To qualify for Paid Parental Leave, documentation of the birth or adoption/placement of a child should be submitted as soon as it becomes available and no later than thirty (30) calendar days after the birth or adoption/placement. **Submission of supporting documentation to HRT Benefits does not substitute submission of supporting documents to the HRT Paid Parental Leave Administrator.**

12.0846 If the employee fails to provide the Department Head with the required

documentation or certification within the specified time period, the Department Head should determine that the employee is not entitled to Paid Parental Leave and require that the absence be charged to leave without pay or other forms of paid time off.

- 12.0847** To validate an absence, appropriate documentation may be required at any time if requested by the department, Central HR, or Payroll. Paid Parental Leave may be denied if appropriate documentation is not received.

Employees begin their Paid Parental Leave on the date specified in their request unless their child is born or adopted earlier or later. In these cases, employees need to notify their department and Central HR as soon as possible to be able to begin leave.

12.085 Limitations of Paid Parental Leave

- 12.0851** An employee may not use Paid Parental Leave in excess of the employee's normally scheduled workweek.

- 12.0852** For Paid Parental Leave to be used on a part-time (intermittent) basis, the leave schedule must be consistent with the department's operational needs and be approved in writing by the Department Head prior to the beginning of the leave.

- 12.0853** Eligible employees are strongly encouraged to plan in advance for when they expect to use Paid Parental Leave and communicate their plans to their immediate supervisor or Department Head, so they can do the necessary planning for their department's operational needs.

- 12.0854** **Paid Parental Leave must be used only for caring for or bonding with the child. Employees are not allowed to engage in any employment during the time the employee is taking Paid Parental Leave.** Department Heads may also adopt policies prohibiting their employees from engaging in any employment while on any type of paid leave including Paid Parental Leave. Department Heads may take disciplinary action against an employee who uses Paid Parental Leave for purposes other than those described in this policy.

- 12.0855** Employees out on Workers' Compensation or Leave of Absence (LOA) are not eligible for Paid Parental Leave.

12.086 Coordination with Other Leave

- 12.0861** Paid Parental Leave is a supplement to the employee's existing sick and other leave at the time of the qualifying event (birth, adoption, or placement for adoption).

12.0862 Paid Parental Leave is designed to run concurrently with FMLA and is not intended to extend the 12-week FMLA period. An employee on Paid Parental Leave who meets the FMLA eligibility requirements will be placed on FMLA leave at the start of the Paid Parental Leave. If the employee meets FMLA eligibility during the Paid Parental Leave period, the employee will be placed on FMLA at that time. All other requirements and provisions under the FMLA will apply.

12.0863 The County will maintain all benefits for employees during the Paid Parental Leave period just as if they were taking any other County paid leave.

Employees must follow their department's call-in procedures and provide periodic status reports to their department when on Paid Parental Leave.

12.09 INFANT SICK LEAVE

In recognition of the additional medical care needs of infants after birth, Harris County will provide eligible employees up to 40 hours of Infant Sick Leave to seek medical care for their infants during the infant's first 12 months of birth. An employee will not receive more than the maximum allotted amount of Infant Sick Leave in a rolling 12-month period, regardless of whether more than one birth, adoption, or placement event occurs within that 12-month time frame. The Infant Sick Leave expires a year after the birth and also applies to adopted and placement of infants. Eligible employees must provide medical documentation to support the need to use Infant Sick Leave.

Example: Jessica's baby was born on May 2, 2025. Jessica has until May 1, 2026, to use up to 40 hours of Infant Sick Leave to seek medical care for her infant.

12.10 PREGNANCY AND BIRTH OF A CHILD

12.101 Accommodations: Pregnancy, Childbirth, Related Conditions

Employees or applicants affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions may seek a reasonable accommodation for limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions. Accommodations that cause an undue hardship on operations may be denied.

12.1011 Denial of employment opportunities to a qualified employee or based on need for such an accommodation is strictly prohibited.

12.1012 Retaliation against employees or qualified applicants for reporting or opposing unlawful discrimination on the basis of a pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition strictly prohibited.

12.102 Lactation/Breastfeeding: Harris County supports breastfeeding employees through accommodations to allow adequate time, proper space, and resources to build and maintain milk supply during the workday.

12.1021 Harris County shall provide a private accessible area, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, for the purpose of expressing breastmilk. When available, employees may use the dedicated Lactation Rooms or other agreed spaces, for the purpose of expressing breastmilk. Designated Lactation Rooms include the following:

- a locking door, an electrical outlet, a clean work surface, and comfortable chair
- a safe, clean water source and sink for washing hands and cleaning breast-pumping equipment
- access to a hygienic clean place to store expressed breast milk. Employees are responsible for clearly labeling breast milk and removing from storage at the end of each workday.

12.1022 All Department lactation locations shall be reported to the Harris County, Engineering Department, Building Operations Services. If you need assistance locating or establishing a Lactation Room, please contact HRT Benefits and Wellness. If you would like to request to use your own private office or other private location to express breastmilk, please consult your supervisor or HRT.

12.1023 Work schedule and work pattern flexibility will be provided to accommodate two to three reasonable lactation breaks a day for an employee to express breastmilk for their nursing child for up to one year after the birth of a child or when the employee begins providing breastmilk for a nursing child. If additional time is necessary to maintain milk supply, contact your supervisor or Human Resources & Talent.

12.1024 Lactation breaks of up to 20 minutes shall be paid. Break times more than 20 minutes are unpaid. If an employee is not completely relieved from duty while expressing breastmilk, the time will be considered compensable and must be reported as Hours Actually Worked by the employee. Employees are encouraged to utilize their normal meal and compensated break times for any lactation needs. Managers will collaborate with employees to schedule any additional breaks on a case-by-case basis to fit the needs of each employee. **Retaliation against employees who exercise their rights under this policy is strictly prohibited.**

12.11 LEAVE OF ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY (LOA)

12.111 Regular Position Employees who have exhausted their Vacation Leave, Compensatory Time, Sick Leave, and FMLA leave, if applicable, or who have other extenuating circumstances may request an unpaid Leave of Absence for up to 6 months, not to exceed 6 months in a calendar year. If you do not return from leave on the date approved, you will be separated from the payroll. Give your Department Head at least 30 days' written notice asking for the LOA and specifying when and why you need it. Departments can waive the 30-day notice requirement.

12.112 Employees on Leave of Absence do not get paid for the holidays.

12.113 Department Heads may place a Regular Position Employee who has exhausted available paid leave and is unable to return to work on LOA without the employee's permission with written notice to the employee.

12.114 People on LOA:

- Must return all County equipment and property (e.g., keys, badges, laptops, electronic or hardcopy documents and files) before the leave;
- Are not employees;
- Do no work for the County; and
- Have no job protection.

12.115 During an LOA, you are not eligible for Harris County health insurance unless you elect to continue health insurance coverage under the terms of COBRA. If you choose COBRA during an LOA and return to Active Duty, you will not have a 2-month waiting period for Group Health and Related Benefits.

12.116 People who return to Active Duty before or at the end of an LOA keep the benefit of any previously accrued Creditable Service.

12.117 Upon the expiration of an LOA, if the Department Head fails to do one of the following:

- return the individual to Active Duty in the same position and salary;
or
- return the individual to Active Duty in another position and salary; or,
- remove the individual from the payroll by submitting a Change in Status Form.

12.118 The Auditors Office will automatically remove the individual from the payroll effective the expiration date of the LOA.

12.12 FUNERAL/BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

12.121 [Regular Position](#) Employees may take up to 3 days off (up to 24 hours) with [Department Head](#) approval for the death of an [Immediate Family Member](#). (See § 1.07).

12.122 The number of hours you receive is prorated based on the number of hours you are regularly scheduled to work up to 8 hours per day. You must take the leave within 5 calendar days of the funeral or date of death. Your Department Head may approve additional time off using [Compensatory Time](#), Vacation Leave, or [Unpaid Leave](#).

12.123 Department Heads may require you to provide proof of death and/or family relationship.

12.124 If you are already on Unpaid Leave or Workers' Compensation, you are not eligible for Funeral Leave.

12.125 If your Immediate Family Member dies while you are on vacation, you may ask to change your Vacation Leave to Funeral/Bereavement Leave.

12.126 If a County employee, appointed official or elected official, or someone closely associated with the County dies, a Department Head may approve representation at the funeral. Employees who attend by direction of their Department Head are representing the County therefore; the hours spent at the funeral are Hours Actually Worked.

12.13 FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides eligible employees with leave (with or without pay), certain benefits protection, and job restoration for qualifying events. It is an important right and we encourage you to apply for FMLA if you ever need it. Here is a general description of the FMLA. If this policy conflicts with the FMLA, employees will get the rights required by law. Key employees, while able to use FMLA leave, may be excluded from certain FMLA protections and will be notified of their "key employee" status if they request FMLA leave; however, Department Heads are deemed Key employees. In addition, other department employees who may fall within the threshold are considered Key Employees. If we reasonably believe that an employee has taken FMLA leave for a fraudulent reason, we may discipline the employee.

12.131 DEFINITIONS

The words and terms defined in this section have the meaning given unless the context clearly indicates another meaning.

12.1311 Child

A biological, adopted, foster, or stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing *in loco parentis (in the place of a parent)*, who is under 18 years of age or who is 18 years of age or older and is incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability.

12.1312 Employment Benefits

All benefits the County provides or makes available to Eligible Employees, including group life, health, and disability insurance, Sick Leave, and Retirement.

12.1313 Group Health Plan

Any plan of, or contributed to by, the County to provide health care to employees or the families of such employees.

12.1314 Health Care Provider

A doctor of medicine or osteopathy who is authorized to practice medicine or surgery (as appropriate) by the State of Texas; or any other person determined by the United States Secretary of Labor. Chiropractors are only health care providers under the FMLA if they are providing treatment consisting of manual manipulation of the spine to correct a subluxation as demonstrated by X-ray to exist.

12.1315 Intermittent Leave

Leave taken in separate blocks of time due to a single illness or injury, rather than one continuous period of time, which may include periods from a portion of an hour or more to several weeks.

12.1316 Parent

The biological parent of an employee or an individual who stood *in loco parentis (in the place of a parent)* to the employee when the employee was a child.

12.1317 Serious Health Condition

- a. An illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves overnight, inpatient care at a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility, including any period of incapacity or subsequent treatment in connection with such inpatient care; or
- b. Continuing treatment by a licensed health care provider. Generally, a chronic or long-term health condition that would result in a period of three consecutive days of incapacity with the first visit to the health care provider within seven days of the onset of the incapacity and a second visit within 30 days of the incapacity would be considered a health serious condition. For chronic conditions requiring health care periodic visits for treatment, such visits must take least twice a place at year.

Example: Chronic serious health conditions include things like, diabetes, lupus, multiple sclerosis, PTSD, and other qualifying emotional and mental illnesses.

- c. A permanent or long-term condition for which treatment may not be effective. You or your covered family member must be under the continuing supervision of, but need not be receiving active treatment by, a health care provider.

Example: This includes conditions such as Alzheimer's, a severe stroke, or terminal stages of a disease.

- d. Any period of absence to receive multiple treatments (including any period of recovery therefrom) by a provider of health care services under orders of, or on referral by, a health care provider, either for restorative surgery after an accident or other injury, or for a condition that would likely result in a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive days in the absence of medical intervention or treatment.

Example: This includes treatment for conditions such as cancer (chemotherapy, radiation, etc.), severe arthritis (physical therapy) or kidney disease (dialysis).

- e. Any period of incapacity due to pregnancy or for prenatal care.

12.132 Eligibility

You must have worked for the County for a total of at least 12 months within the past 7 years and have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 months before you begin FMLA leave.

12.133 Qualifying Events

FMLA leave can be for one or more of the following events:

12.1331 Any incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care, or childbirth.

12.1332 To care for your child after birth or placement for adoption or foster care within 12 months of the birth or placement of the child.

- Spouses who work for the County do not need to split the 12 workweeks for the birth or placement of a child or to bond with a newborn or newly placed child.

12.1333 To care for yourself, your spouse, child, or parent (not in-law) with “serious health condition” as defined in §12.1317.

12.1334 Qualifying exigencies arising because your spouse, child, or parent is a covered military member either on active duty or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty, in support of a contingency operation in a foreign country.

The qualifying exigencies are:

- short-notice deployment (no more than 7 days)
- military events and activities
- childcare and school activities
- financial and legal arrangements
- counseling
- rest and recuperation (up to 5 days)
- post-deployment activities
- care for military member’s parent who is incapable of self-care when care is necessitated by member’s covered active duty; and
- additional activities that arise out of active duty that your department agrees to.

12.1335 Military caregiver leave to care for an injured or ill service member or veteran who is your spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for serious injury or illness sustained in the line of active duty. For veterans, this leave is only available for 5 years after discharge.

If you have questions regarding what a qualifying event under the FMLA is, contact the Human Resources & Talent Department.

12.134 Amount and Use of Leave

- 12.1341** You may take up to 12 weeks of FMLA leave per calendar year for qualifying events listed in § 12.1331 – 12.1334. You may take up to 26 weeks for military caregiver leave in a single 12-month period measured forward from the first day of military caregiver leave. Spouses who work for the County must split the 26 workweeks for military caregiver leave. If you take Military Caregiver Leave and any FMLA leave for another qualifying event the total combined leave may not exceed 26 workweeks during a single 12-month period.
- 12.1342** If you qualify for FMLA, you may use it continuously, intermittently, or on a reduced leave schedule. Department Heads have the discretion to deny intermittent leave for the birth or placement of a child or to bond with the child.
- 12.1343** If you need leave intermittently or on a reduced schedule for planned medical treatment, **you must try to schedule the treatment to avoid disruption to the department.** We might temporarily transfer you to another position with equivalent pay and benefits if it makes it easier on the Department.
- 12.1344** If you use continuous FMLA leave (and are not on workers' compensation) you must use all paid time available on the first day of leave before using unpaid FMLA leave. For intermittent FMLA leave, you have to use all available paid time before taking unpaid FMLA leave. Sick Leave is only applicable if the Qualifying Event is your own serious health condition or if you use Family Sick and Wellness Leave for the serious health condition of a spouse, parent, or child.
- 12.1345** Most injuries covered by workers' comp leave also qualify as a serious health condition under FMLA. If the employee on workers' comp leave is eligible for FMLA, we will designate the absences as both Workers' Compensation and FMLA.
- 12.1346** For airline flight crew employees, an employee will meet the hours-of-service requirement if, during the previous 12 months, the employee has worked or been paid for not less than 60 percent of the employee's applicable monthly guarantee and worked or been paid for not less than 504 hours. An eligible flight crew employee is entitled to 72 days of FMLA leave during any 12-month period for qualifying events.

12.1347 Employees on an approved leave of absence, including FMLA leave, may not perform outside or supplemental employment. Employees with pre-existing and approved secondary employment may be exempt if these duties do not conflict with the medical restrictions or reasoning for leave. Engaging in unauthorized outside employment while on leave may be considered fraudulent use of leave and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

12.135 Requesting FMLA Leave

12.1351 If you need FMLA leave tell your supervisor or payroll clerk either orally, in writing or on an [Auditor's Form 0455A](#). You must give us sufficient information to determine whether the leave qualifies for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave.

Calling in "sick" without giving more information is not sufficient notice that you need FMLA leave.

12.1352 If the need for leave is foreseeable, you have to notify your department at least 30 days prior to taking FMLA leave. If the need for FMLA arises unexpectedly, notify your department as soon as practicable. If you don't, it may delay the start of the leave.

12.1353 Within five business days after you give sufficient notice, your department representative will give you [Auditor's Form 0455B](#), the Notice of Eligibility and Rights and Responsibilities and the applicable FMLA certification:

- [Auditor's Form 0456A](#) - FMLA Certification of Employee's Serious Health Condition;
- [Auditor's Form 0456B](#) - FMLA Certification of Family Member's Serious Health Condition;
- [Auditor's Form 0456C](#) - FMLA Certification of Qualifying Exigency for Military Family Leave;
- [Auditor's Form 0456D](#) - FMLA Certification for Serious Injury or Illness Current Service member;
- [Auditor's Form 0456E](#) - FMLA Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of Veteran.

You must return the completed certification within 15 calendar days or your request may be denied unless you give the department a reasonable explanation of why you need more time.

12.1354 If you are absent from work for 4 consecutive calendar days and your supervisor is uncertain whether the absence is for a Qualifying Event, your department may call you to discuss the situation. Of course, any time you are absent, we have the right to ask you about it. The department may also send the appropriate FMLA forms to you and start preliminarily designating your absences as FMLA leave. If it turns out that FMLA does not apply, we will remove the preliminary designation.

12.136 Obtaining Clarification or Authentication

12.1361 If the medical certification is incomplete or insufficient, the department representative will use [Auditor's Form 0457](#), FMLA Designation Notice, to tell you what information is still needed. You will get at least 7 calendar days to provide the missing information.

12.1362 After you have had the chance to cure any deficiencies, designated personnel, may, communicate with the Health Care Provider to clarify the certification. Your immediate supervisor will not contact your healthcare provider. If you do not authorize us to clarify the certification or get the requested clarification yourself, we may deny your FMLA leave request.

12.1363 In all instances, it is YOUR responsibility to provide a complete and sufficient certification. If you don't, it may result in the denial of FMLA leave.

12.1364 Designated non-supervisory personnel may communicate with the Health Care Provider to authenticate any medical certification. We do not need your permission to do that.

12.1365 In certain circumstances, the Department has the right to require an employee to obtain a second or third opinion at the Department's expense.

12.137 Designation of FMLA Leave

12.1371 Within five business days of getting the completed appropriate certification form, we will give you a written notice on [Auditor's Form 0457](#), FMLA Leave Designation Notice, stating whether your request qualifies for FMLA, and, if so, describing the conditions of the leave and the requirements

12.1372 As stated above, we can designate absences as FMLA an employee's permission if we have information that the absences qualify for FMLA and notify the employee in writing.

12.138 Re-Certification

12.1381 We can request recertification of the serious health condition (whether yours or your family member's) if (1) you ask to extend the leave, (2) when circumstances have changed, or (3) if the department receives information casting doubt on the reason given for the absence.

12.1382 We may also request recertification every six months in connection with an FMLA absence.

12.1383 If you need FMLA due to your own health condition or that of a family member that lasts beyond a calendar year, you will be expected to provide a new medical certification each year.

12.139 Your Health and Related Benefits During Leave

Harris County maintains Group Health Plan coverage for employees on FMLA under the same conditions as if you had continued to work.

12.1391 If you choose to continue coverage while on unpaid FMLA leave, you have to pay your share of the premiums, if any. Harris County will bill you bi-weekly. If Harris County does not get payment within 30 days of the due date, your coverage will end on the 31st day. You may use the [Auditor's Form 0459](#) to elect coverage.

12.1392 If you choose not to return from FMLA or if you work less than 30 calendar days after returning to work, Harris County will bill you for any premiums Harris County paid for maintaining your benefits while you were on [Unpaid Leave](#).

12.1393 Departments are responsible for notifying the Human Resources & Talent Department if an employee fails to return to work.

12.140 Job Protection

12.1401 If you return to work before or on the working day after your authorized FMLA leave expires, you will get your job back or an equivalent job with equivalent benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment.

12.1402 If you do not return to work after your FMLA, you may be disciplined, including termination. Check in with your department as the end of your leave approaches to discuss what options you might have.

12.1403 Constable Deputies out on workers' compensation leave who have exhausted FMLA leave and are unable to return to work at the end of their Department Head's term are subject to having their employment terminated at the end of the current term of office of the Constable.

12.141 Status Reports and Return to Work

Stay in touch with your department. We want to know how you are doing. Your department will tell you who to talk to and how often to call on the Notice of Eligibility and Rights & Responsibilities (Form 0455B). If you are on intermittent FMLA, you still have to follow your department's call-in procedures for reporting an absence unless you have extenuating circumstances. Employees may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, if they fail to provide status reports or follow call-in procedures.

12.142 Fitness for Duty and Return to Work Documentation

If you take continuous FMLA leave for your own serious health condition, we expect you to return to work when your health care provider releases you. If your doctor releases you with restrictions, contact your department right away to discuss those restrictions and your work status. We will tell you on the designation notice if you are required to have a fitness for duty certification to return to work. Failure to submit a fitness for duty certification may delay or result in the denial of reinstatement.

We know FMLA is complicated. If you have any questions, talk with your supervisor, appropriate department representative, or call the Human Resources & Talent Department.

12.14 ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE

- 12.141** Administrative Leave is a temporary leave from scheduled workdays and may be paid or unpaid, depending on employee classification and circumstances. Placement on Administrative Leave requires express approval from the Department Director, Director of Human Resources, or their designee. All uses of Administrative Leave will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- 12.142** The County may place an employee on Administrative Leave when immediate removal from the workplace is necessary, including but not limited to:
- pending investigation of alleged misconduct,
 - workplace safety or security concerns,
 - protection of County property or information, or
 - other limited circumstances where the County determines an employee should not remain in the workplace during review.
- 12.143** The County may temporarily restrict system access, building access, or other resources to prevent unauthorized access during Administrative Leave.
- 12.144** Non-exempt employees on unpaid Administrative Leave are prohibited from performing any work, including responding to emails, calls, chats or performing tasks remotely.
- 12.145** Employees placed on unpaid Administrative Leave may elect to use applicable accrued paid leave for purposes of pay continuity while on Administrative Leave.



HARRIS COUNTY | HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL



SECTION 13.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

SECTION 13. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

The grievance process is a way to settle grievances between the County and an employee as quickly as possible to promote efficient operations and maintain positive morale in the workplace. These procedures apply to all County employees (not volunteers) except those in the Sheriff's Office or Community Supervision & Corrections.

Effective October 1, 2026, departments covered under the Consultation policy will need to follow the steps outlined in [Appendix A](#) to file a formal grievance.

Try to resolve complaints using all available avenues within your department before filing a formal, written grievance. We encourage Department Heads and supervisors to work with employees to resolve grievances informally.

Efforts at informal resolution are unrelated to the formal grievance procedures and do not extend the time limits set out below. Grievances filed after the time limit(s) are automatically denied.

13.01 GRIEVABLE MATTERS

13.011 A grievance is a violation, misinterpretation, misapplication, or disparity in the application of a specific law, ordinance, resolution, written or unwritten policy, or rule regarding wages, hours of work, or conditions of work that negatively affects an employee.

a. Examples of grievable matters include, but are not limited to:

- Misapplication of a salary ladder;
- Misinterpretation of a department mandatory overtime policy;
- Unfair treatment in the application of a department shift bidding policy;
- Violation of the County compensatory time policy.

b. Examples of matters that are not grievable include, but are not limited to:

- Employee performance evaluations that are not directly related to wages;
- Written reprimands;
- Terminations - Grievances based upon an employee's termination from employment are denied upon filing, except those pertaining to violations of the Texas Whistleblower Act as defined in section [4.035](#);
- Promotion decisions, unless covered by a salary ladder.

13.012 If at any point in the grievance process the Department determines that the subject of a grievance is not grievable as defined above, the Department

notifies the employee in writing before the next applicable deadline. Employees may appeal that determination to the Grievance Resolution Committee by submitting written notice to the County Grievance Coordinator within 5 working days of receiving it. The County Grievance Coordinator or her designee has 5 days from receipt of the appeal to set a meeting date for a panel of the Grievance Resolution Committee to evaluate the appeal and issue a response. If the Committee determines the issue is grievable, the grievance resumes at the point it left off. If the Committee determines that the issue is not grievable, the grievance process ends. The Committee's decision is final.

13.013 The grievance procedure does not apply to allegations of violation of law, harassment, discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, pregnancy, disability, genetic information or any other protected class in accordance with federal and state laws, or unlawful retaliation. Discrimination allegations are handled under the County's Non-Discrimination Policy.

13.02 GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR FORMAL GRIEVANCES

13.021 To file a grievance you must follow these steps in the order given. **You have 5 days to take the first step in the Grievance Process.** *If a Department Grievance Coordinator, or Department Head fails to respond within the time limits, the employee must take the next step in the procedure to continue with the grievance process.*

Example: Marco timely appeals a grievance to his Grievance Coordinator, who fails to respond within 5 working days. To continue with the grievance, Marco must appeal the grievance to the Department Head within 5 working days after the deadline his Grievance Coordinator missed.

- 13.022** Time limits begin on the first day after the applicable occurrence, initial notification, filing, response, or recommendation. Working days do not include weekends or County Holidays.

Example: Doug receives notification that he is going to be suspended. His suspension is scheduled to begin the following week. In order to file a grievance, Doug must submit Form 100 to his Department Grievance Coordinator within 5 working days of receiving the initial notification of his suspension.

- 13.023** Employees must use the County [grievance forms](#). The forms are available from the Department's Grievance Coordinator, the Department's human resources staff, from the Human Resources & Talent Department, and via the County's website.
- 13.024** Employees get their usual rate of pay for time spent during normal working hours in the grievance proceedings.
- 13.025** Employees may represent themselves or be represented by someone else when presenting a grievance.
- 13.026** Commissioners Court appoints the County Grievance Resolutions Committee.
- 13.027** Department Heads designate a Department Grievance Coordinator and notify all employees of the designation. Any questions regarding the grievance process should be directed to the employee's Department Grievance Coordinator.

13.03 FORMAL GRIEVANCE STEPS

13.031 Step 1 – Department Grievance Coordinator

Complete [Form 100](#) and give it to your Department Grievance Coordinator **within 5 working days** of the occurrence. Keep a copy for yourself. Your Department Grievance Coordinator will note the date received on Form 100. The Department Grievance Coordinator has 5 Working Days from receiving Form 100 to investigate, meet with you, and respond in writing on County [Form 200](#).

All grievances that include complaints of discrimination or harassment under the County's Non-Discrimination policy, must be forwarded to the Human Resources & Talent Department.

13.032 Step 2 – Department Head

You may appeal the Department Grievance Coordinator's determination by completing [Form 300](#) and giving it to your Department Head within 5 working days of receiving Form 200.

The Department Head has 5 working days from receipt to investigate, meet with you, and respond in writing on Form 300.

13.033 Step 3 – Grievance Committee

13.0331 You may appeal the Department Head's determination by completing [Form 400](#) and submitting it to the County Grievance Resolutions Committee Chairperson/Coordinator within 5 working days of receiving [Form 300](#). The appeal *must*:

- state the reason for the appeal; and
- pertain to the original grievance filed; and
- include all written responses pertaining to the specific complaint; and
- include your signature and the name of your representative if you have one.

13.0332 The County Grievance Coordinator schedules a hearing within 5 working days from receipt of [Form 400](#). The Resolutions Committee reviews and carefully studies your complaint and the Department's responses. Each party may present evidence. Upon hearing the grievance, the Resolutions Committee votes to adopt a response and recommendation.

13.034 Step 4 – Appropriate Authority

13.0341 Either the employee or the Department Head may appeal the Grievance Resolutions Committee's determination to a governing body other than Commissioners Court that has appropriate supervisory authority over the Department Head, if one exists, and has established a grievance procedure. For Juvenile Probation employees, the appropriate authority is the Juvenile Board. The appealing party must submit a written appeal with the County Grievance Coordinator within 10 working days of receiving the Grievance Resolutions Committee's determination. The appeal must state the reason for the appeal and specify whether appealing party wants it to be heard at a public hearing or in Executive Session. The County Grievance Coordinator places the appeal on the appropriate agenda.

13.0342 In accordance with all applicable laws, the appropriate authority considers the grievance and takes whatever steps it deems necessary under the circumstances.

13.035 Step 5 - Commissioners Court

13.0351 Either you or your [Department Head](#) may appeal the determination made in the highest applicable step described above to Commissioners Court by filing a written appeal with the County Grievance Coordinator within 10 working days. The appeal must state the reason for the appeal and specify whether the appealing party wants it to be heard at a public hearing or in Executive Session. The County Grievance Coordinator places the appeal on the Commissioners Court Agenda.

13.0352 In accordance with all applicable laws, Commissioners Court considers the grievance and takes whatever steps it deems necessary under the circumstances, including referring the matter back to the governing body referenced in Step 4.



HARRIS COUNTY | HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL



SECTION 14.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

SECTION 14. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Harris County is committed to fostering a high-performance culture that supports employee development, accountability, and organizational excellence. Performance management is a continuous process through which supervisors and employees establish clear expectations, exchange ongoing feedback, and assess individual contributions against defined goals and departmental standards. Effective performance management supports the County's operational mission and promotes the equitable treatment of all employees.

14.01 PURPOSE

The purpose of the County's performance management framework is to:

- Align individual employee contributions with departmental goals and County-wide strategic priorities;
- Support employee professional development and career growth;
- Provide a consistent, objective, and documented basis for employment decisions related to compensation adjustments, promotions, corrective action, and separation; and
- Promote a culture of transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement across all Harris County departments.

14.02 DEPARTMENT HEAD RESPONSIBILITY

14.021 Department Heads are responsible for implementing and maintaining a performance management process within their respective departments consistent with County policy. Department Heads may adopt supplemental internal performance management procedures provided they do not conflict with these Policies and Procedures or applicable law.

14.022 Department Heads are responsible for ensuring that their supervisors and managers are trained on performance evaluation processes, deliver timely and constructive feedback, and document performance discussions consistently.

14.03 EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS

Employees are expected to:

- Understand their assigned job duties, performance standards, and goals as established by their supervisor or Department Head;
- Actively and in good faith participate in performance discussions, evaluations, and any associated development activities; and
- Promptly raise concerns about performance expectations or feedback through appropriate supervisory or HR channels.

14.04 PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

14.041 Performance evaluations are a structured tool for documenting and communicating an employee's accomplishments, contributions, and areas for growth during a defined review period. Evaluations are completed in accordance with timelines and formats established or approved by the Department Head.

14.042 Performance evaluations do not constitute a grievable matter under Section 13 of these Policies and Procedures unless the evaluation is directly tied to a wage or compensation action that qualifies as grievable under §13.011. Written evaluations and any supporting documentation are maintained in the employee's personnel file.

14.05 CORRECTIVE ACTION

Performance concerns may be addressed through coaching, feedback, corrective action, or a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), as appropriate based on the circumstances. Corrective action may include verbal counseling, written warning, a formal Performance Improvement Plan, demotion, suspension, or separation from employment, consistent with Section 14 and applicable County policies.

Performance-based corrective actions are distinct from disciplinary actions arising from misconduct or policy violations. A documented pattern of performance deficiencies may be considered in any subsequent review of an employee's continued employment.

14.06 COORDINATION WITH OTHER POLICIES

For questions regarding performance management programs, evaluation tools, timelines, or best practices, contact Human Resources & Talent (HRT) or visit the HRT intranet page. HRT provides guidance materials, supervisor training, and consultation support to departments on request.

14.07 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Performance management intersects with other County policies, including those governing leave, reasonable accommodations, and equal employment opportunity. Department Heads and supervisors are encouraged to consult with HRT before taking performance-based actions involving employees on approved leave or receiving workplace accommodations under Section 5.



HARRIS COUNTY | HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL



SECTION 15.

SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT

SECTION 15. SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT

15.01 To the extent permitted by law, employees have the status of “employee-at-will” and do not have a contractual right, express or implied, to remain employed by the County. Your employment may be terminated for any reason and at any time without notice. As a matter of law, employees have no tenure. Similarly, you may resign with or without notice at any time.

15.02 Not reporting to work and not calling to report the absence (no call/no show) is a serious matter. If you do not report to work without contacting your supervisor as required by department policy, you may be disciplined, including termination. Some departments consider a no call/no show lasting three days to be job abandonment and a voluntary resignation. Be sure you know your department’s policy.

15.03 The Texas Payday Act does not apply to Harris County.

15.04 BENEFITS UPON SEPARATION

15.041 You will get paid based on your final regular rate of pay for unused Vacation **unless** you separate and return to the County without a [Break in Employment](#). For purposes of this section, Vacation does not include allowances, incentives or Longevity Pay.

14.0411 Part Time and Temporary Employees who forfeit their Vacation Leave balance as outlined in §12.033, will get paid for their forfeited vacation hours upon separation.

15.042 You will get paid for unused [Compensatory Time](#) as outlined in the policy on Overtime Compensation and Compensatory Time.

15.043 Employees who separate with a [Break in Employment](#) forfeit all accrued Sick Leave, including Family Sick and Wellness Leave.

15.044 Employees who separate employment with the County lose coverage on the last date of the pay period following their separation date.

15.045 Before an employee is terminated in the payroll system, the employee, supervisor, manager, and/or payroll representative must ensure the employee's timesheet is complete and approved.

15.046 Departments should refer to the Harris County Auditor’s Form 3412 [Employee Separation Summary](#) when processing a separation.

You must return all County property and equipment (e.g., keys, cell phone, laptop, and badge) in your custody before receiving your final pay. The County takes all steps necessary to collect monies you owe and to get back all County property and equipment.

SUMMARY OF BENEFITS

	<u>Regular Position</u> (At least 32 hours per week – <u>Regular</u> <u>Employee</u>)	<u>Part Time</u>	<u>Temporary</u> <u>Positions</u>
Sick Leave	Yes	No	No
Sick Leave Pool³	Yes	No	No
Paid Parental Leave⁴ Infant Sick Leave⁵	Yes	No	No
Vacation Leave	Yes	No	No
Retirement benefits	Yes	Yes	No
Compensatory Time¹	Yes	Yes	Yes
Med/Life/LTD, etc. benefits	Yes	No	No
Holidays	Yes	No	No
Funeral Leave	Yes	No	No
Temporary Military Leave	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jury or Witness Duty	Yes	No	No
Workers' Compensation	Yes	Yes	Yes
FMLA²	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Longevity</u> Pay	Yes	No	No

¹ Non-Exempt Employees whose Hours Actually Worked exceeds 40 hours in one workweek earn Compensatory Time at the rate of 1½ times per hour in excess of 40. Any employee whose Paid Absences plus Hours Actually Worked exceeds 40 hours in one workweek accrues Compensatory Time on a straight-time basis.

² FMLA eligibility is subject to certain qualifications, including having worked at least 1,250 hours in the 12 months immediately before the leave.

³ Sick Leave Pool eligibility is subject to certain qualifications, including having been continuously employed by the County for at least twelve (12) months immediately preceding participation in the program.

⁴ Paid Parental Leave eligibility is subject to certain qualifications, including having been continuously employed with the County as a full-time, regular employee for at least 45 consecutive calendar days immediately preceding the birth, adoption, or placement of a child.

⁵ Infant Sick Leave eligibility is subject to certain eligibility qualifications and can only be used during the infant's first year of birth.



HARRIS COUNTY | HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL



SECTION 16.

CONSULTATION POLICY

SECTION 16. CONSULTATION POLICY

Commissioners Court has adopted a consultation policy, which is attached to this Manual. Please see [Appendix A](#).

**A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING A CONSULTATION FRAMEWORK TO
FOSTER EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF HARRIS
COUNTY AND HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT PERSONNEL
POLICIES AND IMPROVED HANDLING OF EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCES AND
DISCIPLINARY MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO AND ADOPTION
BY THE COMMISSIONERS COURT**

* * * * *

WHEREAS, stable and enduring relationships of mutual trust between public employers and public employees are essential to ensuring fair and equitable treatment in the workplace, sustaining employee morale, and promoting the effective and responsive delivery of high-quality public services in Harris County;

WHEREAS, the Harris County Commissioners Court seeks to foster an inclusive and collaborative process for developing and implementing personnel policies for the County's own employees, including employees working at the Harris County Flood Control District, recognizing that open and structured communication with employees enhances operational efficiency by supporting informed policy decisions, effective resolution of employee concerns, and sound use of public resources;

WHEREAS, Section 617 of the Texas Local Government Code allows public employees the right to present grievances individually or through a labor organization that does not claim the right to strike and does not seek to enter into a collective bargaining agreement on behalf of public employees;

WHEREAS, Section 617.004 enshrines an individual's right to be free from discrimination in local government employment due to an individual's membership or nonmembership in a labor organization;

WHEREAS, Section 160.005 of the Texas Local Government Code requires the Harris County Commissioners Court to enact necessary orders and procedures to ensure the effective implementation of grievance systems for county employees; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioners Court has determined that the designation of a Consultation Agent to interface with the County about employee concerns will enhance operational efficiency, employee morale, and equitable personnel practices across Harris County;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COMMISSIONERS COURT
OF HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS, THAT:**

SECTION 1. PURPOSE

1.1. The Harris County Commissioners Court adopts this resolution (the “Resolution”) to establish a structured process for nonsupervisory, nonconfidential employees subject to the Harris County and Harris County Flood Control District Personnel Policies & Procedures Manual (“Manual”) to select a labor organization to serve as a “Consultation Agent” to consult with a group of designated supervisory employees of Harris County (“Management Agent”) as part of a “Consultation Team.” The objective of establishing the Consultation Team is to improve communication and foster engagement between employees of Harris County and Harris County management over personnel practices and thereby to maintain and ultimately enhance high-quality county services while adhering to the statutory limits on collective bargaining set forth in Section 617 of the Texas Local Government Code. The Consultation Team will meet on a regular basis to develop workplace policy proposals to be made to the Commissioners Court for its consideration. This consultation framework in no way supersedes the authority of the Commissioners Court over personnel policies for Harris County employees, as all proposals made via the Consultation Team process will ultimately be adopted, rejected, or modified at the sole discretion of the Commissioners Court. The Consultation Agent will also support Harris County’s effective and efficient resolution of employee grievances and disciplinary matters.

SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS

2.1. “Consultation Agent” will refer to the labor organization designated in accordance with this Resolution to engage in consultation with Harris County through the Consultation Team and to carry out other responsibilities under the Resolution.

2.2. “Management Agent” will refer to the team of non-Eligible county employees designated to engage in consultation with the Consultation Agent through the Consultation Team and to carry out other responsibilities under the Resolution. The Management Agent will consist of nine (9) “Management Representatives” designated as follows:

- i. the County Administrator, Flood Control District Director, Toll Road Authority Director, and the Chief People Officer (Human Resources & Talent) will each be a Management Representative ex-officio but may appoint a designee in their place.
- ii. each member of the Commissioners Court (i.e., the County Judge and each Commissioner) will designate one (1) non-Eligible county employee to serve as a Management Representative. Management representatives appointed under this subparagraph will each hold their appointment as Management Representative at will and may be removed at any time using the same process as governs their appointment.
- iii. if the number of Management Representatives designated under subparagraph (i) and subparagraph (ii) above is less than nine, then each remaining Management Representative will be a non-Eligible county employee chosen jointly by the members of the Commissioners Court, provided that no Management Representative designated under this

subparagraph will come from the same Department of the County as any other Management Representative. In the event the members of the Commissioners Court cannot agree on whether or not to appoint a particular Management Representative (i.e., if there is a tie vote), the County Administrator will break the tie. Management representatives appointed under this subparagraph will each hold their appointment as Management Representative at will and may be removed at any time using the same voting process as governs their appointment.

iv: the Chief People Officer (Human Resources & Talent) may also designate a non-voting representative from the Human Resources & Talent Department to attend meetings and provide technical guidance on personnel, labor relations, and employment policy matters.

2.3. “Consultation Representative” will refer to an Eligible Employee appointed by the Consultation Agent to serve on the Consultation Team. The Consultation Agent will appoint eight (8) Consultation Representatives to serve on the Consultation Team.

2.4. “Consultation Team” will jointly refer to the Management Representatives, Consultation Agent, and the Consultation Representatives.

2.5. “Employee Consultation Review Board” will refer to an impartial board, created by the Commissioners Court and consisting of five County residents reflecting a diversity of perspectives on employee relations, that will evaluate disagreements between the Consultation Agent and the Management Agent in the event the Consultation Team cannot reach consensus over a change proposed to the Manual by either of them, and which will make a recommendation to the Commissioners Court regarding which position to adopt. It will remain within Commissioners Court’s sole discretion whether or not to accept that recommendation.

2.6. “Manual” will refer to the Harris County and Harris County Flood Control District Personnel Policies & Procedures Manual.

2.7. “Grievance” refers to a claim that the employee was adversely affected “by a violation, misinterpretation, misapplication, or disparity in the application of a specific law, ordinance, resolution, written or unwritten policy, or rule regarding wages, hours of work, or condition of work.” “Grievance” will refer to a grievance made by an Eligible Employee under Harris County’s formal, multi-step process—administered by Human Resources & Talent—for resolving employee grievances promptly and equitably, as set forth in Section 13 of the Manual.

2.8. “Grievance Representative” will refer to an Eligible Employee or Consultation Agent staff member, appointed by the Consultation Agent to handle Eligible Employee grievances or disciplinary matters in which the Eligible Employee who is the subject of the grievance or disciplinary matter in question has affirmatively elected to be represented by the Consultation Agent in such grievance or disciplinary matter, including but not limited to hearings before the Harris County Grievance Resolution Committee.

2.9. “Eligible Employees” will refer to:

- i. all Harris County public employees, who are not Excluded Employees, from

departments under the jurisdiction of the Commissioners Court, which as of the date of this Resolution consist of the following:

- a. Domestic Relations
- b. Department of Economic Equity & Opportunity
- c. Office of the County Engineer
- d. Flood Control District
- e. Housing & Community Development
- f. Human Resources & Talent
- g. Institute of Forensic Sciences
- h. Intergovernmental & Global Affairs
- i. Office of Managed Assigned Counsel
- j. Office of County Administration
- k. Office of Management & Budget
- l. Pollution Control Services
- m. Pretrial Services
- n. Public Defender's Office
- o. Public Health
- p. Public Library
- q. Resources for Children & Adults
- r. Texas A&M Agrilife
- s. Toll Road Authority
- t. Universal Services
- u. Veterans Services

For avoidance of doubt, in the event the Commissioners Court reorganizes any of the above-listed departments or creates new county departments (or any other subordinate entity, regardless of how denominated) under its exclusive jurisdiction, it will remain the case that all employees under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Commissioners Court who are not Excluded Employees will always be Eligible Employees, and

ii. all Harris County employees working for the County Judge or a County Commissioner directly who are not Excluded Employees; provided however that the County Judge or a County Commissioner may, by stating in writing at any time, either include (as Eligible Employees) or exclude (as Excluded Employees) his or her own employees from coverage under this policy.

2.10 All Eligible Employees will henceforth be covered by the Manual.

2.11 “Excluded Employees” will refer to:

- i. employees of elected officials other than the County Judge or County Commissioners, except as provided by Section 2.9.
- ii. Confidential Employees, who provide administrative support to an employee who assists in the formulation, determination and effectuation of human resources policies subject to the consultation process.
- iii. Supervisory Employees, who are appointed by the employer and who have as their primary duties the management of Eligible Employees and have authority to:

- a. Hire, transfer, suspend, lay off, recall, terminate, promote, discharge, assign, reward or discipline other employees or responsibility to direct them, to adjust their grievances or to effectively recommend such action;
- b. Make budgetary decisions; and
- c. Be consulted on decisions relating to the consultation process,

if, in connection with the foregoing, the exercise of such authority is not of a merely routine or clerical nature but requires the use of independent judgment. The exercise of such authority will not be deemed to place the employee in supervisory employee status unless the exercise of such authority occupies a significant portion of the employee's workday. Nothing in this section will be construed to mean that an employee who has been given incidental administrative duties will be classified as a supervisory employee.

2.12 "Labor Organization" will mean any membership organization whose primary purpose is dealing with one or more employers concerning grievances, labor disputes, wages, hours of employment, or working conditions, and that represents or has represented (or is affiliated with another organization that represents or has represented) public employees in the State of Texas as of the date of this Resolution.

SECTION 3. SELECTION OF CONSULTATION AGENT

3.1. Following passage of this Resolution, the first Labor Organization to submit signed membership cards from at least 20% of Eligible Employees will be deemed the presumed initial Consultation Agent. A Labor Organization will obtain this status by submitting a digital file, in a common and readily accessible format, containing scanned or electronic versions of signed membership cards to the County Administrator, who will verify the number of cards naming Eligible Employees, and the numerical sufficiency of such cards, within five (5) business days of receiving them and, upon such confirmation, will announce the identity of the presumed initial Consultation Agent the following business day by posting the announcement on the County's main website home page or an equivalent alternative medium. The County Administrator will provide the presumed Consultation Agent a list of Eligible Employees within 24 hours of the posting by the County Administrator. Should the County Administrator verify that a Labor Organization has submitted signed membership cards from fewer than 20% of Eligible Employees under this Section, the County Administrator will immediately return the submitted signed membership cards to the Labor Organization together with a record showing which cards were verified as naming Eligible Employees, which were not verified, and how many additional membership cards from Eligible Employees the Labor Organization would need to submit to reach the required 20% threshold. A Labor Organization will not be prohibited from submitting additional cards required to meet the 20% threshold under this Section provided that no other Labor Organization has already been deemed the presumed initial Consultation Agent.

3.2. Membership cards in the possession of the County Administrator for the purpose of selecting the Consultation Agent under Sections 3.1, 3.3 or 3.7 will be kept confidential by the County Administrator and returned to the submitting prospective Consultation Agent upon completion of the verification process defined in Section 3.1, 3.3 or 3.7.

3.3. If, within five (5) days of the County's announcement of the presumed initial Consultation Agent under Section 3.1, another Labor Organization has submitted signed membership cards from at least 20% of Eligible Employees to the County Administrator, the County Administrator will also verify the number of cards naming Eligible Employees, and the numerical sufficiency of such cards, within five (5) business days of receiving them.

3.4. If, other than the presumed initial Consultation Agent, no Labor Organization has submitted valid and numerically sufficient membership cards under section 3.3, the County Administrator will designate the presumed initial Consultation Agent as the Consultation Agent, and will announce the designation of the Consultation Agent the following business day by posting the announcement on the County's main website home page or an equivalent medium. If, however, one or more other Labor Organizations have submitted valid and numerically sufficient membership cards under section 3.3, the County Administrator will direct that a one-day, in-person secret-ballot election be held within 30 days among all Eligible Employees to determine which of the Labor Organizations that have submitted valid and numerically sufficient membership cards will serve as the Consultation Agent. The County Administrator will provide a list of Eligible Employees to each Labor Organization eligible to participate in such an election within five (5) days of directing the election. The Labor Organization receiving the most votes cast in that election will be designated as the initial Consultation Agent, and the County Administrator will announce the selected Consultation Agent by a posting to the County's website or an equivalent medium the next business day. The County Administrator may, if deemed necessary, promulgate rules to govern all other aspects of holding an election to designate a Consultation Agent under this Section 3.4 and will administer the election.

3.5. Following the announcement of the designation of a Consultation Agent under either Section 3.4 or 3.6, the County Administrator will announce, by posting on the County's main website home page or an equivalent medium, the presumed automatic renewal of this designation on each five-year anniversary of the prior announcement of designation; provided however that if, within 10 days of the announcement of a presumed renewal of designation of the current Consultation Agent, another Labor Organization has submitted signed membership cards from at least 50% of Eligible Employees to the County Administrator, the County Administrator will verify the authenticity and numerical sufficiency of the membership cards of such other Labor Organization(s) within thirty days of receiving them.

3.6. If, other than the current Consultation Agent, no Labor Organization has submitted authentic and numerically sufficient membership cards under section 3.5 the County Administrator will announce that the presumed automatic renewal of the current Consultation Agent has become final, and that the current Consultation Agent has again been designated the Consultation Agent by posting the announcement on the County's main website home page or an equivalent medium the next business day. If, however, one or more other Labor Organizations have submitted valid and numerically sufficient membership cards under section 3.5, the County Administrator will direct that a one-day, in-person secret-ballot election be held within thirty days among all Eligible Employees to determine which of the Labor Organizations that have submitted valid and numerically sufficient membership cards, including the current Consultation Agent who will not have to have submitted any membership cards to stand for reelection, will serve as the Consultation Agent, with the Labor Organization receiving the most votes cast in

that election to be designated as the Consultation Agent and announced by a posting to the County's website or an equivalent medium the next business day. Any rules promulgated by the County Administrator under Section 3.4 will govern an election under this Section 3.6, which will also be administered by the County Administrator.

3.7. Prior to the designation of an initial Consultation Agent, any Labor Organization demonstrating signed membership cards from at least five percent (5%) of Eligible Employees will be granted access to County worksites during working hours (pursuant to applicable County policies, including but not limited to any County regulations regarding building or facility access) for the purpose of collecting additional membership cards. A Labor Organization will obtain this status by submitting original copies of signed membership cards to the County Administrator, who will verify their validity and numerical sufficiency within five (5) business days of receiving them. If the County Administrator verifies that a Labor Organization has submitted signed membership cards from fewer than 5% of Eligible Employees under this Section 3.7, the County Administrator will immediately return the submitted signed membership cards to the employee organization together with a record showing which cards were verified as valid (i.e., as naming Eligible Employees), which were not so verified, and how many additional membership cards from Eligible Employees the Labor Organization would need to submit to reach the required 5% threshold.

SECTION 4. CONSULTATION TEAM

4.1. The Consultation Team will meet in person at least monthly on the first Friday of each calendar month, or on another date that same month agreed upon by the Consultation Team at its previous meeting. Meetings will last 120 minutes and will be conducted in person unless the Consultation Team votes, by majority, to have a shorter and/or virtual meeting the next time it convenes. Meetings will not be open to the public, however with agreement of the other agent's representatives, an agent's representatives may invite experts, witnesses, employees, etc., to present pertinent information to the Consultation Team. Either party may place any issues, concerns or other matters relating to the terms and conditions of employment of Eligible Employees on the agenda. Meetings will require a quorum of a majority of Management Representatives and Consultation Representatives. The agenda for each Consultation Team meeting will include discussion of any changes to the Manual proposed by either the Consultation Agent or the Management Agent at least two weeks prior to the meeting, followed by any other subjects related to the Manual proposed by either the Consultation Agent or Management Agent at least two weeks prior to the meeting if time permits. The Consultation Team shall also devote one meeting each year to conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of this Consultation Policy at which they will discuss whether to propose any changes to the Consultation Policy to the Commissioners Court.

4.2. Any proposed change to the Manual by either the Consultation Agent or Management Agent must be discussed by the Consultation Team during at least two consecutive meetings. If, after discussion of a proposed change at a second meeting, a majority of the Consultation Team votes to recommend the change to the Commissioners Court, the Consultation Team will send a letter to the Commissioners Court recommending that the Commissioners Court adopt the change, the item will be added to the agenda of the next meeting of the Commissioners Court for a vote. Any vote of the Commissioners Court under this section will be at the sole discretion of the

Commissioners Court, including that the Commissioners Court will have the right to adopt an alternative proposal than the one submitted by the Management Agent or the Consultation Agent, or to vote to take no action whatsoever.

4.3. If, after discussion of a proposed change at a second consecutive meeting of the Consultation Team, the Consultation Team has reached impasse as reflected by a tie vote, the Consultation Team will send a letter, within 30 days, to the Employee Consultation Review Board containing the position of the Consultation Agent and Management Agent on the proposed change. A copy of the letter will also be sent to the Commissioners Court. Within 30 days of receiving such a letter from the Consultation Team, the Consultation Review Board will meet to consider it as follows:

- (a) The Consultation Review Board will allow the Consultation Agent and Management Agent each to give live testimony at the Consultation Review Board meeting in support of its respective position.
- (b) At the conclusion of the Consultation Review Board meeting, the Consultation Review Board will vote on whether to recommend to the Commissioners Court the position of the Management Agent or the Consultation Agent, and within ten business days will issue a non-binding written report and recommendation to the Commissioners Court explaining the Consultation Review Board's conclusions.

4.4. Upon receiving a report and recommendation from the Consultation Review Board under Section 4.3, or if no report and recommendation has been received from the Consultation Review Board by the Commissioners Court within forty-five (45) days of the Commissioners' Court receiving the letter from the Consultation Team under Section 4.3, the Commissioners Court will add the matter to the agenda of the next meeting of the Commissioners Court for a vote. Any vote of the Commissioners Court under this section will be at the sole discretion of the Commissioners Court, including that the Commissioners Court will have the right to adopt an alternative proposal than the one submitted by the Management Agent or the Consultation Agent, or to vote to take no action whatsoever.

4.5. Before a vote by the Commissioners Court under Section 4.4, the Management Agent and Consultation Agent will each have the opportunity to present to the Commissioners Court their position and any alternative proposal it wishes the Commissioners Court to consider for a vote on the matter.

4.6. Consultation Representatives will be allowed permission to access the work areas of Eligible Employees (pursuant to applicable County policies, including but not limited to any County regulations regarding building or facility access) for the purpose of performing their duties as the Consultation Agent, which permission will not be unreasonably withheld.

SECTION 5. CONSULTATION AGENT SUPPORT FOR THE EFFICIENT RESOLUTION OF EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCES AND DISCIPLINARY MATTERS

5.1. Texas Local Government Code 160, et seq. requires Commissioner Court to adopt a grievance procedure for employees "concerning their wages, hours of work, or conditions of

work.” In furtherance of the Commissioners’ Court’s obligation, pursuant to Section 160.005(a)(7) of the Texas Local Government Code, to enact necessary procedures to ensure the effective implementation of grievance systems for county employees, and in accordance with the Harris County Grievance Procedure’s policy to settle Grievances as quickly as possible to ensure efficient work operations and maintain positive employee morale, the Commissioners Court hereby amends the Grievance Procedure, which is outlined in Section 13 of the Manual, to allow the following:

- (a) Employees are permitted to grieve pursuant to Section 13 of the Manual, and the Consultation Team will develop a proposed change to Section 13 to allow for the grievance of discipline and discharge.
- (b) Employees with the same concerns may jointly file a group grievance provided they all seek consistent resolution of their joint grievance.
- (c) The Consultation Agent will be notified by HRT each time an Eligible Employee files a Grievance or is subject to discipline. The Consultation Agent will receive such notification, including the Eligible Employee’s contact information, within three (3) business days of when the County becomes aware of the Grievance or potential discipline.
- (d) Eligible Employees who file Grievances or are subject to potential discipline will be informed of the option to request representation by the Consultation Agent or another representative of their choosing, and will be provided contact information for the Consultation Agent and a reasonable period of time to request representation thereby, prior to any meeting held by the County with the Eligible Employee on the Grievance. If an Eligible Employee elects to be represented by the Consultation Agent, the County will provide all pertinent information regarding the Grievance to the Consultation Agent, including timely access to relevant documents, consistent with applicable privacy laws.
- (e) Grievance Representatives will be permitted to represent employees in Grievances or disciplinary matters and prepare for the same, and will further be permitted to request access to Harris County buildings and worksites for this purpose (pursuant to applicable County policies, including but not limited to any County regulations regarding building or facility access), which requests will not be unreasonably denied. Grievance Representatives will be able to perform these duties as part of their County employment. Eligible Employees must seek pre-approval for any and all such work from the County Administrator or their designee (or, for employees of a member of Commissioners Court, from their supervisor), which will not be unreasonably withheld. All work that will result in overtime or compensatory time must be approved by the employee’s Department Head. Misuse of any work time under this Section may constitute grounds for discipline, subject to applicable Harris County personnel policies.

The current grievance procedure is only applicable to “employees.” Individuals whose employment has been terminated are no longer employees for whom Harris County must provide a grievance. As such, Harris County’s adopted grievance procedure presently excludes grievance of terminations.

SECTION 6. NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION, ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEE INFORMATION, AND CONSULTATION AGENT ACCESS

6.1. The Consultation Agent will be provided at least 30 minutes during each new employee orientation session held by the Human Resources and Talent (HRT) department to meet with newly hired Eligible Employees. During this time, a Consultation Representative and/or Grievance Representative will present information on the Manual, with a particular focus on the Consultation Team, the Grievance procedure, and the role of the Consultation Agent. The Consultation Agent may also, but is not required to, use this opportunity to facilitate membership. Harris County shall have no obligation to provide time to meet with Excluded Employees of other elected officials or others not covered under the Consultation Policy during the orientation.

6.2. The Consultation Agent will be provided, on the first Friday of each calendar month, with a list of all Eligible Employees who have opted into information disclosure. This list will include, but is not limited to, the following information: the employee's name, mailing address, email address, telephone number, department, salary or wage rate, pay grade, worksite address, employee identification number, date of hire, exempt or non-exempt status, and any other similar identifying information possessed by Harris County. This requirement does not apply to individuals who have elected not to allow public access to personnel information or to those not required to make such an election by the Texas Public Information Act. The County Administrator will develop a process for any Eligible Employee to opt into having personal information that is covered by Texas Government Code Section 552.024 included on this list. The Consultation Agent will not disclose any information obtained from this list to third parties.

6.3. Consultation Representatives may participate in or prepare for activities or functions related to their responsibilities as Consultation Representatives as part of their County employment. Eligible Employees must seek pre-approval for any and all such work from the County Administrator or their designee (or, for employees of a member of Commissioners Court, from their supervisor), which will not be unreasonably withheld. All work that will result in overtime or compensatory time must be approved by the employee's Department Head. Misuse of any work time under this Section may constitute grounds for discipline, subject to applicable Harris County personnel policies.

SECTION 7. PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP DUES

7.1. Eligible Employees may elect to authorize payroll deductions for membership dues to the Labor Organization serving as Consultation Agent, and the County may not terminate or impede in any way Eligible Employees' ability to do so for as long as the Labor Organization serves as Consultation Agent.

7.2. The Consultation Agent must complete all required steps to become an authorized participant in accordance with Chapter 155 of the Texas Local Government Code and the Harris County Auditor's Accounting Procedure for Establishment of New Voluntary Payroll Deduction Policy.

SECTION 8. MISCELLANEOUS

8.1. Nothing in this resolution will be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

- a. The authority granted by law to a Harris County Department, or head thereof; or
- b. The functions of the County Administrator or the Office of Budget Management relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals;

8.2. This resolution will be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

8.3. The Resolution is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the County, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, agents, or any other person.

8.4. HRT will amend the Manual to implement this Resolution.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 6th day of August, 2026.

HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS

DocuSigned by:

266C1B1FCB5A4DC...

Lina Hidalgo, County Judge

Date: August 6, 2026

ATTEST:

By: _____
Teneshia Hudspeth, County Clerk