

CALHOUN COUNTY, TEXAS



PERSONNEL POLICIES

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WELCOME TO CALHOUN COUNTY!

We are excited to have you as an employee of Calhoun County. You were hired because the elected official, appointed official or department head believes you can contribute to the success of Calhoun County, and share our commitment to serving the public and our constituents with excellence.

Calhoun County is committed to providing excellent service to the public in all of our county offices. As part of the team, we hope you will discover that the pursuit of excellence is a rewarding aspect of your career here.

This personnel policy contains some key policies, benefits, and expectations of Calhoun County, and other information you will need. Each elected or appointed official may have additional detailed policy and procedures for their office.

Your job is essential to fulfilling our mission of serving our constituents every day and to meet or exceed their expectations. We achieve this through dedicated hard work and commitment from every Calhoun County employee. You should use this handbook as a ready reference as you pursue your career with Calhoun County.

Please consult with your elected official, appointed official or department head regarding questions you may have concerning these personnel policies.

Welcome aboard!

NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES OF CALHOUN COUNTY

The policies set forth in this manual do not constitute a contract between the County of CALHOUN and any of its employees, but rather are intended as guidelines for personnel administration.

The County of CALHOUN is an “**at will**” employer and within provisions of state and federal law regarding public employment can dismiss employees at any time, with or without notice, for any reason or no reason at all and employees are free to resign their position at any time for any reason or no reason at all.

The County of CALHOUN has the right to change these policies at any time, without prior notice to employees.

Each reference in these policies to the “County” means the County of CALHOUN, Texas.

WELCOME TO CALHOUN COUNTY!	iii
NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES OF CALHOUN COUNTY	iv
1.00 GENERAL POLICIES	1
1.01 AUTHORITY	1
1.02 SEVERABILITY	1
1.03 RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PERSONNEL POLICIES.....	1
1.04 PURPOSE	1
1.05 APPLICABILITY OF PERSONNEL POLICIES.....	1
1.06 DISSEMINATION OF PERSONNEL POLICIES.....	2
1.07 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY	2
1.08 HARASSMENT	2
1B-6 SEXUAL HARASSMENT	3
1.09 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.....	4
2.00 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES	4
2.01 GENERAL.....	4
2.02 PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE.....	4
2.03 TIMELINESS AND ATTENDANCE	5
2.04 OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES.....	5
2.05 GIFTS AND GRATUITIES	5
2.06 CHAIN OF COMMAND AND COMMUNICATIONS.....	5
2.07 TELEPHONE USE.....	5
2.08 INDEBTEDNESS TO THE COUNTY	5
2.09 POLITICAL ACTIVITY	6
2.10 INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICES (IRS) FRINGE BENEFITS	6
3.00 EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES	6
3.01 RESPONSIBLE AGENT FOR APPOINTMENT	6
3.02 METHODS OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION.....	6
3.03 QUALIFICATIONS.....	7
3.04 AGE REQUIREMENTS.....	7
3.05 EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES (NEPOTISM).....	7
3.06 TESTING	8
3.07 PHYSICAL STANDARDS	8
3.08 VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY TO WORK	8
3.09 DRIVING RECORD	8
3.10 DISQUALIFICATION	8
3.11 ORIENTATION AND TRAINING	9

4.00 TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT	9
4.01 CATEGORIES	9
4.02 AT WILL EMPLOYMENT	10
4.04 BENEFITS	10
4.05 ESSENTIAL/NON ESSENTIAL PERSONNEL STATUS	10
5.00 PERSONNEL FILE	10
5.01 GENERAL.....	10
5.02 MEDICAL RECORDS	11
6.00 EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION AND ADVANCEMENT	11
6.01 PAY	11
6.02 PAYDAYS.....	11
6.03 CHECK DELIVERY.....	11
6.04 PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS.....	12
6.05 PROMOTIONS	12
6.06 LATERAL TRANSFERS	12
6.07 DEMOTIONS	12
6.08 APPROVING AUTHORITY	13
7.00 WORK SCHEDULE AND TIME REPORTING	13
7.01 WORKWEEK AND WORK HOURS	13
7.02 SCHEDULE ADJUSTMENTS	14
7.03 OVERTIME WORKED	14
7.04 EXEMPTIONS FROM FLSA (OVERTIME COMPENSATION).....	14
7.05 OVERTIME COMPENSATION	14
7.06 HOLIDAYS WORKED.....	15
7.07 LEAVE OR HOLIDAYS TAKEN AND OVERTIME	15
7.08 TIME REPORTING	15
8.00 BENEFITS	16
8.01 MEDICAL AND LIFE INSURANCE	16
8.02 RETIREMENT PLAN	17
8.03 WORKERS' COMPENSATION.....	17
8.04 SOCIAL SECURITY.....	17
8.05 UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE.....	17
8.06 LEAVE TIME.....	17
8.07 CONTINUATION OF GROUP INSURANCE (COBRA)	17
9.00 LEAVE TIME	18
9.01 DEFINITIONS	18
9.02 APPROVAL OF LEAVE	18

9.03	VACATION LEAVE	18
9.04	SICK LEAVE	19
9.05	FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE	20
9.06	HOLIDAYS.....	25
9.07	COMPENSATORY TIME	26
9.08	MILITARY LEAVE.....	26
9.09	JURY/CIVIL LEAVE	27
9.10	FUNERAL LEAVE.....	27
9.11	INJURY LEAVE	28
9.12	ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE	28
9.13	LEAVE OF ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY	28
9.14	ABANDONMENT OF POSITION	29
10.00	PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE	29
10.01	CORRECTIVE ACTION	29
10.02	OPTIONS FOR CORRECTIVE ACTION	29
11.00	SEPARATIONS	30
11.01	TYPES OF SEPARATIONS	30
11.02	RESIGNATION.....	31
11.03	RETIREMENT	31
11.04	REDUCTION IN FORCE (LAYOFF)	31
11.05	DISMISSAL WITH OR WITHOUT CAUSE	31
11.06	DISABILITY	31
11.07	DEATH.....	31
11.08	TERMINATION PAY.....	32
12.00	HEALTH AND SAFETY	32
12.01	SAFETY POLICY	32
12.03	EMPLOYEE SAFETY SUGGESTIONS.....	32
12.04	ON-THE-JOB INJURIES	32
12.05	DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY	34
13.00	USE OF COUNTY PROPERTY	43
13.01	GENERAL POLICY	43
13.02	USE OF TOOLS, EQUIPMENT, PROPERTY	43
13.03	USE OF COUNTY VEHICLES	44
13.04	VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE	44
13.05	VEHICLE INSURANCE	44
13.06	ACCIDENT REPORTING	44
13.07	USE OF BUILDINGS AND PREMISES	45
14.00	USE OF COUNTY COMPUTERS	45

14.01	GENERAL	45
14.02	INTERNET ACCESS.....	45
14.03	AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF E-MAIL.....	45
14.04	RIGHT TO PRIVACY.....	46
15.00	CELLULAR PHONE SERVICES	46
15.01	AUTHORIZATION OF CONTRACTS	46
15.02	SERVICE OPTIONS	46
15.03	MONITORING AND PAYMENT	47
16.00	TRAVEL EXPENSES.....	47
16.01	PURPOSE.....	47
16.02	GENERAL PROCEDURES AND ACCOUNTING	47
16.03	MILEAGE	48
16.04	LODGING.....	48
16.05	MEALS.....	48
16.06	OTHER TRANSPORTATION	49
17.00	POLICY ON AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT	49
17.01	POLICY OVERVIEW	49
17.02	DEFINITIONS	49
18.00	WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY	50
18.01	POLICY OVERVIEW	50
18.02	PROHIBITED CONDUCT.....	50
18.03	REPORTING PROCEDURES	51
18.04	RISK REDUCTION MEASURES.....	51
18.05	DANGEROUS/EMERGENCY SITUATIONS	51
18.06	ENFORCEMENT.....	51
19.00	SMOKING AND VAPING POLICY.....	52
19.01	PURPOSE.....	52
20.00	EMERGENCY CLOSING	52

1.00 GENERAL POLICIES

1.01 AUTHORITY

These policies are established by the Commissioners' Court, the governing body of the County of Calhoun (County), and any deletions, amendments, revisions, or additions to the policies must be approved by that body. Oral or written interpretations or clarifications of the policies will only be issued by the Commissioners' Court.

These policies completely replace and supersede any and all personnel policies previously adopted, individually or as a set of policies, by the Commissioners' Court.

1.02 SEVERABILITY

The provisions of these policies are severable, and if any provision or part of the provision is held invalid, illegal, or unenforceable, this will not affect the validity of the remaining provisions or parts of provisions, which will remain in force and effect.

1.03 RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PERSONNEL POLICIES

The Commissioners' Court of the County, in coordination with County officials, is responsible for the formulation and administration of personnel policies and procedures.

1.04 PURPOSE

These policies set forth guidelines governing employment in the County and inform employees of the benefits and obligations of employment with the County. These policies have been prepared to provide general information only.

All employees are at will and, as such are free to resign at any time with or without reason. The County, likewise, retains the right to terminate employment at any time with or without reason or notice, regardless of the stated frequency for payment of wages or salary (hourly, bi-weekly, etc). No action to the contrary will be binding on the County unless placed in writing and formally approved by the Commissioners' Court. Nothing in these policies is intended to be nor should be construed as a guarantee that employment will be continued for any period of time.

1.05 APPLICABILITY OF PERSONNEL POLICIES

These personnel policies apply equally to all employees of the County unless a class of employees is specifically exempt by these policies or by written agreement with the County.

In cases where federal or state laws or regulations supersede local policy for specific groups of employees, such laws or regulations will substitute for these personnel policies only insofar as necessary for compliance.

1.06 DISSEMINATION OF PERSONNEL POLICIES

The Commissioners' Court maintains the official set of personnel policies with all revisions for reference by employees. Each employee will be given a complete set or access to a complete set upon employment. A copy of amendments, revisions or new policies will be provided to employees. In addition, each Department Head will maintain a complete set and copies of subsequent revisions. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, if a question arises about a particular policy, the official set of policies maintained by the Commissioners' Court will control.

Every employee is required to sign an acknowledgment of receipt of these policies. Employees are required to read, or have read to them, this manual carefully and to adhere to the rules and regulations stated.

1.07 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

It is the policy of the County to prohibit discrimination against any person in job structuring, recruitment, examination, selection, appointment, placement, training, upward mobility, discipline, or any other aspect of personnel administration based on race, age, religion, color, disability, national origin, or gender.

The County will make reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals with known disabilities unless doing so would result in an undue hardship. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training.

The County prohibits retaliation or discrimination against any employee for reporting an unlawful or discriminatory employment practice, or for participating in an investigation of an allegation of discrimination. Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of the supervisor or Human Resources Coordinator. Anyone found to be engaging in unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

The County does not discriminate on the basis of genetic information (Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 - GINA) with respect to hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral, and other aspects of employment.

1.08 HARASSMENT

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

Harassment is strictly prohibited by Calhoun County whether committed by an elected official, appointed official, department head, co-worker or non-employee with whom the county does business.

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

Every reported complaint will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. While all claims of harassment shall be handled with discretion, there can be no complete assurance of full confidentiality. The official or department head to which a claim has been reported shall be responsible for seeing that prompt action is taken to investigate the claim.

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

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

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

1B-6 SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

Use the following procedures so that your complaint may be resolved quickly and fairly.

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

Retaliation against an employee who reports sexual harassment or who cooperates as a witness in the investigation is prohibited by law as well as this policy.

Employees who feel they have been subjected to illegal retaliation should immediately report the situation to the elected official, appointed official or department head who is responsible for the department in which they work. If, for any reason, the employee feels that reporting the retaliation to the official or department head may not be the best course of action, the report should be made to the County Judge or to the County Attorney.

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

1.09 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

It is the policy of the County to make its employment application process, employee activities, working environment, employee benefits, employee training, and employee advancement process accessible to disabled persons and to make reasonable accommodations to a qualified individual with a disability who is an applicant or employee unless that accommodation will place an undue hardship on the County operations.

2.00 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

2.01 GENERAL

The County is a public, tax-supported governmental entity. Its employees must adhere to high standards of public service that emphasize professionalism, courtesy, and avoidance of even the appearance of illegal or unethical conduct at all times. Employees are required to give a full day's work, to efficiently perform the work items assigned as their responsibility, and to do their part in maintaining good relationships with the public, supervisor, and other employees and officials.

2.02 PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE

Employees of the County are hired to provide services to its citizens and to perform specific tasks in a professional manner. As representatives of the County, employees are required to set and meet high standards both in performing quality work and in presenting a professional personal image to the public. Employees will maintain standards of personal grooming as dictated by position and/or Department Head.

2.03 TIMELINESS AND ATTENDANCE

Employees are to be punctual in reporting for work, keeping appointments, and meeting schedules for completion of work. An employee who expects to be late for or absent from work must report the expected tardiness or absence to the Department Head.

Failure to report within the required period set by the Department Head may be considered justification for disallowing paid leave for an absence. Unless otherwise approved by the Department Head, employees are expected to call on each day of absence. Where the nature of the absence necessitates an extended period of time off, longer reporting intervals will be approved by the Department Head. Frequent tardiness or unexcused absence is not permissible and is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination. (See Section 9.01.02)

2.04 OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

An employee of the County shall not engage in any activity or other employment which will adversely affect the ability to effectively carry out the duties and responsibilities of the job as determined by the Department Head or Elected Official.

If a County employee is injured on the job while in the course of employment outside employment with the County, the employee may not file a workers' compensation claim against the County for benefits related to the injury.

An employee accepting other employment while still being employed by the County shall notify the supervisor before beginning such work.

2.05 GIFTS AND GRATUITIES

A County employee will not solicit or accept any gift (including a free service) that might tend to influence official actions or impair independence of judgment in performance of duties for the County. County employees may not engage in any activity, practice or conduct which conflicts with, or appears to conflict with, the interest of the County.

2.06 CHAIN OF COMMAND AND COMMUNICATIONS

Individual County employees are responsible to the Department Head or supervisor designated by the Department Head. Directions regarding work to be done, expected results, and the adequacy of work performance follow the chain of command.

2.07 TELEPHONE USE

All personal calls must be kept to a minimum. Excessive personal calls during business hours will subject the employee to discipline up to and including discharge.

2.08 INDEBTEDNESS TO THE COUNTY

The County will not issue a paycheck to a County employee if the employee is indebted to the County. Employees are required to acknowledge in writing their acceptance of this policy during their orientation process.

2.09 POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Employees of the County shall not:

1. Use official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the result of any election or nomination of office; or
2. Directly or indirectly coerce, attempt to coerce, command or advise a state or local official or employee to pay, lend or contribute anything of value to a party committee, organization agency or person for a political reason; or
3. Directly or indirectly involve the County in any partisan politics; or
4. Use any equipment, property or material owned by the County for political activity or engage in political activity while on duty for the County; or
5. Allow posting of any political signage on County property.

It is the policy of the County to foster governmental efficiency and to ensure that employees can perform their jobs without being pressured to support specific County or other political candidates.

County employees are encouraged to vote and, if desired, enter and be active in politics.

2.10 INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICES (IRS) FRINGE BENEFITS

Calhoun County will comply with the IRS with regard to fringe benefits such as county uniforms, County vehicle usage and day-trip meals. Employees may be responsible for paying payroll taxes on such fringe benefits

3.00 EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

3.01 RESPONSIBLE AGENT FOR APPOINTMENT

The official or Department Head for each department is responsible for the selection and length of tenure of employees within their overall comprehensive budget.

3.02 METHODS OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Each official or department head is responsible for the selection and length of tenure of their employees within their department's comprehensive budget. Department heads also determine the method used to fill each vacancy, which may include:

1. Promotion from within;
2. Lateral transfer from within; or
3. Public announcement or competitive consideration of external and internal applicants for employment.

The Human Resources Coordinator will certify budgeted positions are available for recruitment prior to processing all notices of job opportunities.

3.03 QUALIFICATIONS

It shall be the responsibility of each Department Head to establish the minimum required knowledge, skills and abilities for each staff position, and the acceptable levels of experience and training for each.

3.04 AGE REQUIREMENTS

Age limitations will be applied only as required by a specific state or federal law applicable to the County.

3.05 EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES (NEPOTISM)

Nepotism is the showing of favoritism toward a relative. The practice of nepotism in hiring personnel is prohibited by state law (Texas Government Code, chapter 573).

No person shall be hired who is related within the second degree by affinity (marriage) or within the third degree by consanguinity (blood) to the official.

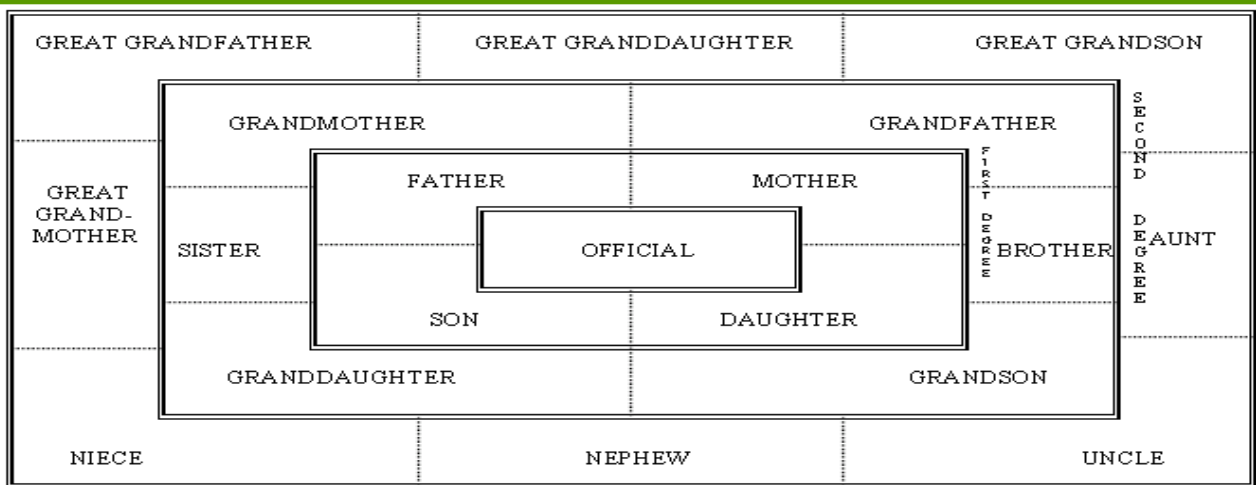


FIGURE 1 – CONSANGUINITY KINSHIP CHART

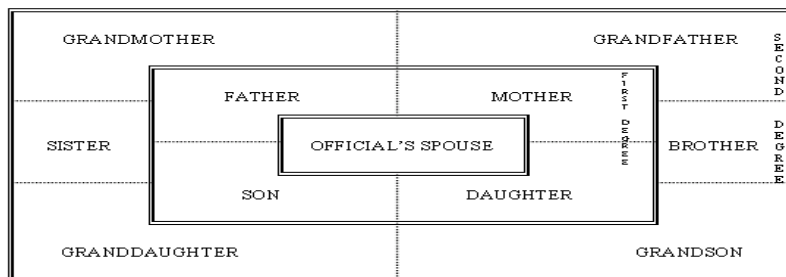


FIGURE 2 – AFFINITY KINSHIP CHART

Spouses of relatives within the first or second degree of consanguinity (i.e., son-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, etc.) are also included in the prohibition.

3.06 TESTING

Department heads will determine tests administered for employment or promotion. Tests will be specifically job-related (“piece-of-the-job”) tests (e.g., operating equipment, word processing, operating a computer, lifting something heavy required in the job, tabulating columns of numbers, or writing samples).

Reasonable accommodations will be made to applicants with a disability, if a request for such accommodation is made by the applicant in advance of a test.

Please refer to the County’s Drug and Alcohol Use and Testing Policies Program (Section 12.05) document for detailed information about required testing for post-offer employment, post-accident or if reasonable suspicion exists that an employee is using or abusing illegal drugs or alcohol.

3.07 PHYSICAL STANDARDS

All full and part time employees are required to pass a physical examination as a condition of employment. Any offer of employment is conditional until the final results are received and it has been determined the employee will meet the essential functions of the position with or without reasonable accommodation.

The physical examination and related blood work, except drug and/or alcohol testing, shall be given by the designated facility. Drug and/or alcohol testing shall be administered by the County’s designated third party. These charges will be paid for by the County.

If a referral is made by the designated facility or a doctor, it shall be the decision and personal expense of the County employee as to any follow-up procedures.

Charges for follow-up services may be submitted, if applicable, to the County’s group insurance carrier.

3.08 VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY TO WORK

In order to comply with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, each new employee is required to complete and sign a Department of Homeland Security Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9) no later than the close of business on the third day of work and to provide proof of identity and employment eligibility.

3.09 DRIVING RECORD

Every County employee who is required to drive a County vehicle on County business must maintain a safe driving record. For this reason, the County shall check a prospective employee’s driving record in a position which requires operating a County vehicle, and may recheck an employee’s driving record as needed after employment in such a capacity.

3.10 DISQUALIFICATION

An employee may be disqualified for employment by the County if:

1. Minimum qualifications for performance of the duties of the position involved were not met;
2. A false statement was knowingly made on the application form;
3. Fraud was committed during the selection process;
4. Not legally permitted to hold the position;

5. Money, service, or any other thing of value to secure an advantage in the selection process was offered or attempted to be offered;
6. The essential functions of the position, with or without reasonable accommodation, are unable to be performed; or
7. Original legal document(s) that establish identity and employment eligibility were not produced within three (3) days of employment.

3.11 ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

Before an individual begins performing actual duties, the employee will be given a brief orientation on County policies by the Human Resources Coordinator or designated representative. The purpose of the session is to enable a new employee to understand the job better and to understand the relationship of the job to the overall operation of the County. During the orientation, employees are to complete necessary paperwork and given a copy or access to the Calhoun County Personnel Policies and must sign a statement of acknowledgment of receipt and understanding of the County “at will” policy.

Employees will receive on-the-job training as needed under the supervision and direction of the Department Head.

4.00 TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT

4.01 CATEGORIES

Regular Full Time: A full time employee shall be any employee in a position who has a normal work schedule of 40 hours per week. Full time employees are eligible for county health insurance and retirement benefits. Other county policies will dictate eligibility for other benefits. Employees may be non-exempt, hourly employees or exempt employees. Non-exempt employees are eligible for overtime compensation. Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime compensation. Calhoun County makes exempt status determination based on the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Regular Part Time: A part time employee shall be any employee in a position who has a normal work schedule of less than thirty (30) hours per week. Regular Part-Time employees are NOT eligible for county health insurance benefits. However, all regular part time employees must be placed on TCDRS retirement regardless of the number of hours worked per week. Other county policies will dictate eligibility for other benefits.

Temporary: A temporary employee is an employee hired to work in a position that is not expected to last for an extended period of time. Temporary employees may be either hourly or salaried, and may be required to work full time or part time. Temporary employees are NOT eligible for ANY benefits. *Note: Temporary employees may be coded to Extra Help line items in departmental budgets.*

RE-EMPLOYMENT

Employees who retire with the County are not eligible for employment with the County for sixty (60) days of retirement. There shall be no prior agreements or collusion between the County, any Department Head and/or supervisor and an employee to rehire the employee after retirement.

4.02 AT WILL EMPLOYMENT

All employees, regardless of category, are at will, and employees may be terminated without cause at any time.

4.04 BENEFITS

Part time and temporary employees may or may not accrue medical benefits. Detailed information is found in the sections of the manual under the main headings, Benefits (Section 8.00) and Leave Time (Section 9.00).

4.05 ESSENTIAL/NON ESSENTIAL PERSONNEL STATUS

As part of Calhoun County's emergency preparedness and operational continuity efforts, each department must classify employee roles based on their necessity during emergency events or County closures.

- **Essential employees** are those whose job duties are vital to public safety, emergency response, or maintaining core County operations. These are further designated as:
 - **Essential – Direct Response:** Employees who are required to respond immediately to the emergency and must report in person to carry out operational or public safety functions (e.g., law enforcement, emergency medical personnel, road and bridge crews).
 - **Essential – Indirect/Support:** Employees who do not directly respond to the emergency itself but whose support functions are critical to sustaining emergency or core County operations (e.g., HR, payroll, IT, communications, or logistics support).

Non-essential employees are those whose job functions can be temporarily suspended during emergencies without compromising critical County services. These employees may be released from duty during a closure, as determined by their elected official or department head.

Each department is responsible for assigning and communicating the essential or non-essential status of each employee in their Department Emergency Action Plan. Status designations must be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

This classification guides responsibilities during County-declared emergencies, including weather-related closures and other incidents. See also 1B-13 Weather Closings and Emergencies and Section 20.00, Emergency Closing.

5.00 PERSONNEL FILE

5.01 GENERAL

The official personnel records of the County are maintained by the Human Resources Coordinator. The Department Head or official may appoint a custodian of records to maintain a department personnel record for their individual employees.

Some information in an employee's personnel file is public information and must be disclosed upon request unless specific items are accepted from disclosure by law. No information from any record placed in an employee's file will be communicated to any person or organization except by the Department Head or an employee authorized to do so by the Department Head.

Each employee will choose whether the County discloses the employee's home address and telephone number to the public on request. If a new employee does not request confidentiality within the first fourteen (14) days of employment or when a new Elected Official takes office, the home address and telephone number on file are considered public information, except law enforcement personnel information. However, employees may change their election for disclosure or confidentiality at any time. A form for designating this information as confidential or public is available from the Human Resources Coordinator.

An employee, or representative designated in writing, may examine the employee's personnel file upon request during normal working hours at the Human Resources Coordinator's office. Examination of personnel files during normal working hours requires the approval of the Department Head.

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

5.02 MEDICAL RECORDS

Employee personnel files do not contain information regarding an employee's medical record(s), nor does it contain any information relating to drug and alcohol testing.

6.00 EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION AND ADVANCEMENT

6.01 PAY

Pay for County employees is set each year by the Commissioners' Court in the adopted operational budget. Rules governing pay increases also are established by the Commissioners' Court.

6.02 PAYDAYS

The pay period for the County is biweekly. Checks are issued every two (2) weeks on Friday. If the pay day falls on a holiday, checks will be issued on the last working day preceding the holiday.

6.03 CHECK DELIVERY

Payroll checks and direct deposit pay stubs are distributed by the County Treasurer. Payroll checks and direct deposit stubs may be picked up in this office by the employee, authorized representative or Department Head; or hand delivered to the Department Head or designee.

No salary advances or loans against future salary will be made to any employee for any reason. A paycheck will not be generated for any pay period in which an employee has not submitted a time record as required in Section 7.08 of this personnel manual.

An employee must bring any discrepancy in a paycheck (such as overpayment, underpayment, or incorrect payroll deductions) to the attention of the County Treasurer's office.

6.04 PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

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

1. Federal social security;
2. Federal income taxes;
3. Court ordered deductions (example: child support, garnishments);
4. Retirement contributions; and
5. Any other deductions required and/or allowed by law;

In addition, in accordance with policies and general procedures approved by the Commissioners' Court, deductions from an employee's pay may be authorized in writing by the employee for:

1. Group health/medical, life, or dental premiums;
2. Deferred compensation;
3. Optional insurance coverage;
4. Section 125/Cafeteria Plan; and
5. Such other deductions as may be allowed by and authorized by the Commissioners' Court.

If there is a change in the employee's family status, address, or other factor affecting payroll withholding, the employee is responsible for obtaining, completing, and returning to the Human Resources Coordinator's office the appropriate forms for communicating these changes.

6.05 PROMOTIONS

A promotion is a change in the duty assignment of an employee which results in advancement to a higher position requiring higher qualifications and involving greater responsibility.

Promotions are recommended by the Department Head within the staffing pattern and budget limits approved by the Commissioners' Court. Employees who are qualified and able to perform the essential functions of the position, with or without reasonable accommodation, may be eligible for consideration for a promotion, if and when a vacancy occurs.

6.06 LATERAL TRANSFERS

Lateral transfers may be made within the same department or among departments, if a vacant position is available and the employee is qualified and able to perform the essential functions of the position, with or without reasonable accommodation. Lateral transfers among departments are made through the position opportunity posting system (Section 3.02).

6.07 DEMOTIONS

A demotion is a change in duty assignment of an employee to a lower job title which may result in a pay reduction. Demotions may be made at the employee's request to occupy a less responsible position, as a reasonable accommodation for an employee with a disability, as a disciplinary measure because of unsatisfactory performance in a higher position, or as a result of a reduction in force.

6.08 APPROVING AUTHORITY

The Commissioners' Court is the approving authority for all payrolls and for any pay increases, decreases, or payroll transfers granted under the terms of these policies and the annual budget.

7.00 WORK SCHEDULE AND TIME REPORTING

7.01 WORKWEEK AND WORK HOURS

The official work period for most County employees is a seven (7) day period beginning at 12:00 midnight on Saturday and ending at 11:59 p.m. on the following Friday. Normal working hours will be determined by the Department Head. However, normal working hours may be altered by special events such as noon and/or evening meetings, conferences, holidays, etc.

Effective March 9, 2025, patrol deputies and corrections officers work a fourteen (14) day work period with a minimum of eighty (80) hours. Pay, as well as compensatory and additional time earned, will be calculated on this work period. (Amended and adopted by Commissioners' Court on March 5, 2025)

Employees are expected to report punctually for duty at the beginning of each assigned workday and to work the full work period established.

Employees who are classified as non-exempt employees must maintain an accurate record of the total hours you **work** each day. It is the responsibility of each employee to verify that their timesheets are correct. Your timesheet must accurately reflect all regular and overtime hours worked; any absences, late arrivals, early departures, and meal breaks. When you receive each paycheck, please verify immediately that you were paid correctly for all regular and overtime hours worked each work week.

Non-exempt employees, unless authorized by your supervisor, should not work any hours that are not authorized. Do not start work early, finish work late, work during a meal break, or perform any other extra or overtime work unless you are authorized to do so. That time worked is to be recorded on your time sheet. Employees are prohibited from performing any "off-the-clock" work. "Off-the-clock" work means work you may perform but fail to report on your time card. Any employee who fails to report or inaccurately reports any hours worked will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. If anyone directs you to work without documenting your time worked, you must tell **Human Resources**

The Commissioners' Court determines the number of hours worked by an employee for the compensation to be received subject to laws governing pay and working hours and to the provisions of the budget.

The County complies with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, H.R. 3590 and will provide a reasonable break time for nursing mothers. Employees seeking this consideration should present their request to their Department Head. The Department Head will coordinate with the Human Resources Coordinator to ensure all provisions of the law and amendments to the FLSA are met.

7.02 SCHEDULE ADJUSTMENTS

Adjustments to the normal hours of operation by use of flex time may be made by the Elected Official or Commissioners' Court in order to better serve the public. Offices may remain open during the noon hour, and lunch periods for some employees may be staggered according to specified requirements.

7.03 OVERTIME WORKED

The policy of the County is to keep overtime to a minimum. However, employees may be required to provide services in addition to normal hours or on weekends or holidays. Overtime is defined as hours worked in excess of the allowable number of hours under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA): (forty (40) hours per seven (7) day work week or eighty-six (86) hours for employees on a fourteen (14) day work period). Under the FLSA, overtime applies only to employees who are not exempt from the Act's overtime provisions.

For employees with positions which are covered by the overtime provisions of the FLSA (non-exempt), overtime begins to accrue with the 41st hour worked during the seven (7) day work week or the 87th worked hour during the fourteen (14) day work period. All overtime for services by employees covered under FLSA must be authorized in advance by the employee's Department Head

7.04 EXEMPTIONS FROM FLSA (OVERTIME COMPENSATION)

Elected officials and any positions determined by law and authorized by Commissioners' Court, are exempt from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and are expected to render necessary and reasonable overtime services with no additional compensation. The salaries of these positions are established with this assumption in mind.

7.05 OVERTIME COMPENSATION

Overtime shall include all time actually worked for the county in excess of 40 hours in any workweek, with the exception of law enforcement and certain fire positions (See policy on "207(K) Work Period and Overtime").

Paid leave shall not be counted in determining if overtime has been worked in any workweek. Except in emergency situations, an employee shall be required to have authorization from their supervisor before working overtime.

Overtime compensation shall be paid in the form of compensatory time off in accordance with the provisions of the FLSA. Covered employees shall receive paid compensatory time off at a rate of one and one-half (1 ½) times the amount of overtime worked.

The maximum amount of unused compensatory time an employee shall be allowed to have at any one time is 240 compensatory hours for employees scheduled on a 40 hour work week, with the exception of law enforcement and certain fire positions (See policy on "207(K) Work Period and Overtime"). When an employee has reached the maximum accrual of compensatory time, any additional overtime worked shall be compensated at a rate of one and one-half (1 ½) the employee's regular rate of pay until compensatory time has been used to bring the balance below the maximum.

Employees shall be allowed to use earned compensatory time within a reasonable period after it is requested provided that the employee's absence will not place an undue hardship on the operations of the department in which the employee works. Compensatory time may be used for any purpose desired

by the employee with supervisor approval. Calhoun County shall have the right to require employees to use earned compensatory time at the convenience of the county.

If an employee status changes from non-exempt to exempt, is promoted, or transitions to another division or department, they shall be paid for all unused compensatory time in the last pay period prior to their transition effective date.

If an employee terminates employment, for any reason, prior to using all earned FLSA compensatory time, they shall be paid for all unused compensatory time in accordance with the requirements of the FLSA.

Calhoun County shall retain the right to “buy back” all or part of an employee’s unused compensatory time by paying the employee for that time at the employee’s current regular rate.

Calhoun County shall retain the right to pay all or part of the overtime worked in any workweek by paying for that overtime at one and one-half (1 ½) the employee’s regular rate of pay.

Each employee shall be responsible for recording any compensatory time used within a pay period on the timesheet for that pay period.

7.06 HOLIDAYS WORKED

The County’s basic policy is that each regular full time employee receives a specified number of paid holidays per year, as set forth in these policies. In most instances, if a regular full time employee is required to work on a scheduled holiday, eight (8) hours off will be given preferably within the same workweek or work period.

7.07 LEAVE OR HOLIDAYS TAKEN AND OVERTIME

If a full time employee who is subject to the overtime provisions of FLSA is required to work extra hours during a workweek in which he or she has used sick or vacation leave, compensatory or holiday time, the leave time will not be counted towards the calculation of hours worked for overtime purposes, the leave or time should be flexed in accordance with Section 7.05.01.

For hours worked, as defined in the previous paragraph, over forty (40) hours during the seven (7) day workweek or eighty-six hours (86) during the fourteen (14) day work periods, the employee will be compensated in the order stated in Section 7.05.01.

7.08 TIME REPORTING

All Non-Exempt, Exempt, and Appointed Employees are required to keep track of their time, including but not limited to daily records, vacation, and sick days. Forms and a system for this purpose are provided by the County. Failure to turn in time sheets by any full time employee will result in non-payment of any vacation left in the employee’s bank upon termination. In this case, an employee can only be guaranteed to be paid the vacation time that has accrued since the last anniversary date.

Time records must be completed, verified and approved by the employee and supervisor. Time worked must be recorded each day in order to maintain an accurate and comprehensive record of the actual time worked. All-time records must be submitted to the County Human Resources Department office no later than 10:00 a.m. on the 5th working day following the end of the previous month. If necessary, due to

holidays, time records may need to be submitted prior to this date. Notification to employees will identify the date time records must be submitted.

Time records are governmental documents and as such require accurate and truthful information and are subject to Texas Penal Code 37.10.

The paycheck for each pay period will not be generated if a time record completed by the employee and authorized by the official or Department Head is not submitted to the County Treasurer's office the first working day following the end of the pay period. A paycheck for this pay period will be generated during the next scheduled pay period after the time record is received.

8.00 BENEFITS

8.01 MEDICAL AND LIFE INSURANCE

In accordance with the general procedures approved by the Commissioners' Court regular full time employees who work a minimum of forty (40) hours per week are eligible for group medical and life insurance. A waiting period of sixty (60) days first of the month shall be in effect for all employees and officials of the County.

Those employees working forty (40) hours per week but who are supplementary paid by the County and are eligible for their group insurance plans are not eligible for coverage under the County's group plan.

Premiums for the employee may be paid by the County. An eligible employee may add dependent coverage and such dependent coverage premium expense will be paid by the employee. The employee portion of dependent coverage will be paid through payroll deduction.

Upon employment, each employee who is eligible for insurance coverage is given detailed information about the County's insurance programs. See the section on Continuation of Insurance (Section 8.09) for information on continued coverage after certain status changes.

A full time employee or dependent (s) who are covered under the County's group insurance shall be eligible for continued group insurance coverage upon separation from the County for period of (18) months by electing COBRA. Premiums for coverage must be paid by the individual

A full time employee that retires and is eligible for Medicare may opt to participate in a supplemental plan. Premiums for coverage must be paid for by the retiree.

8.02 RETIREMENT PLAN

In accordance with the general procedures approved by the Commissioners' Court of the County, all regular employees must become members of the Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS), based on criteria set forth by TCDRS.

Contributions are made through a payroll deduction of an employee's gross salary based on the annually determined rate authorized by the Commissioners' Court. Contributions are deducted before income taxes are withheld, under Section 414 of the Internal Revenue Code. All contributions earn interest each year, based upon the balance as of January 1 of each year.

The County makes a similar contribution on your behalf at the rate determined by the Commissioners' Court each year.

All contributions made by the employee or the County to the TCDRS are subject to the rules and regulations adopted by the TCDRS. Additional and specific information is available in the TCDRS Information Handbook. Copies are available in the Human Resources Coordinator's office.

8.03 WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Employees of the County are covered by the workers' compensation insurance program and the County pays the premium. Detailed information about workers' compensation benefits is found in the section on Health and Safety (Section 12.00).

8.04 SOCIAL SECURITY

All employees of the County are covered by social security. The County contributes to the social security system requirements on behalf of each employee.

8.05 UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

All employees of the County are covered under the Texas unemployment compensation insurance program, and the County pays for this benefit. This program provides payments for unemployed workers in certain circumstances.

8.06 LEAVE TIME

Regular full time County employees are eligible for holidays, vacation leave, sick leave, and other types of leave time under certain circumstances. Detailed information about leave and other types of leave time is found in the sections of this manual under the main headings Leave Time (Section 9.00).

8.07 CONTINUATION OF GROUP INSURANCE (COBRA)

The federal Consolidated Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) provides individuals with the option of continuing group health and dental insurance coverage for both the employee and covered dependents, under specified conditions and at the individual's full expense, at such times the insurance would otherwise terminate (termination, death, divorce, age, etc.). A separate notice will be sent to you/your spouse and/or dependent(s) regarding the continuation of these benefits.

9.00 LEAVE TIME

9.01 DEFINITIONS

Leave Time - Leave time is time during normal working hours in which an employee does not engage in the performance of job duties. Leave time may be either paid or unpaid.

Unauthorized Absence - An unauthorized absence is one in which the employee is absent from regular duty without permission of the Department Head. Employees are not paid for unauthorized absences and such absences are cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination. (See Section 2.03.02)

9.02 APPROVAL OF LEAVE

All leave taken by County employees must be approved by the employee's Department Head. All leave taken will be documented on the employee's time record.

The Department Head is responsible for determining that leave has been accrued and is available for use in the amounts requested by an employee. In addition, the Department Head is responsible for ensuring that all vacation, compensatory, sick leave or other available leave usage is recorded on the time record sent to the County Treasurer's office, for payroll purposes.

9.03 VACATION LEAVE

All regular full time employees are eligible to accrue paid vacation leave. Employees are encouraged to take regular vacations annually.

Vacation leave begins to accrue on the first day of employment, is accrued on a bi-weekly basis, and is credited to an employee's account after each fourteen (14) day period. Employees who work any part of a pay period will receive the full bi-weekly accrual.

Employees are eligible for vacation leave benefits after one year of continuous service and thereafter as the hours have been credited to the employee's balance after each fourteen (14) day period.

Each regular full time employee will accrue vacation leave according to the following schedule:

Years of Service	Monthly Accrual	Annual Accrual
Hire date through 1 years	6.67	80 hours
<i>(Upon completion of (1) full year of continuous employment an employee shall be granted (2) weeks of leave)</i>		
Hire date through 5 years	10	120 hours

(Upon completion of (5) full years of continuous employment an employee shall be granted (3) weeks of leave)

Hire date through 10 years 13.333 160 hours
(Upon completion of (10) full years of continuous employment an employee shall be granted (4) weeks of leave)

Temporary and part time employees do not earn vacation leave. Vacation leave shall not accrue during the time an employee is on unpaid FMLA leave, unpaid personal leave or while unable to work due to an on-the-job injury or illness.

If a holiday occurs while an employee is on vacation leave, the employee shall use the official holiday instead of said leave.

An employee may not accumulate and carry forward from year to year accrued vacation leave. Any unused leave balance on the employees' anniversary date, are forfeited without compensation, unless extreme circumstances occurred and with the Commissioners' Court approval.

Employees are encouraged to schedule vacations and request leave well in advance, and vacation schedules must accommodate the County's work schedule. Provided departmental workloads will permit, employees should be allowed to select desired vacation periods. If the desired leave schedules conflict with County requirements, the County's requirements are given first consideration.

No advance of unearned vacation leave will be made for any reason.

When an employee leaves the service of the County and after completion of a minimum of one year's employment, he or she will be paid for accrued but unused vacation leave up to a maximum of one year's accrual. The rate of pay will be determined by the salary rate in effect at the time of separation.

9.04 SICK LEAVE

Sick leave is accrued on a monthly basis and is credited to an employee's account. Each regular full time employee will accrue sick leave at the rate of 8.0 monthly.

Temporary and part time employees do not earn sick leave. An employee who is on unpaid FMLA leave, unpaid personal leave or unable to work due to an on-the-job injury or illness shall not accumulate sick leave during that period.

Employees are eligible for sick leave benefits after ninety (90) days of continuous service (earning 24 hours to their balance at the end of 90 days). And 8 hours thereafter as the hours have been credited to the employee's balance monthly.

The Department Head may request an employee to furnish, and the employee must provide upon request, written verification by a physician of the illness (verification must be acceptable to the Department Head) supporting the request for sick leave benefits

Failure to provide the required notice may result in the employee's being placed on leave-without-pay status and could result in disciplinary action against the employee. Employees are expected to return to work as soon as they no longer need to take sick leave.

Sick leave not used by regular employees during the year in which it accrues accumulates and is available for use in succeeding years up to a maximum allowable accumulation of 384 hours.

An employee who has exhausted accrued sick leave benefits may request to use accumulated vacation or other accrued paid leave or may request leave of absence without pay. No advance of unearned sick leave benefits will be made for any reason.

When a holiday occurs while an employee is on a paid sick leave, the employee shall use the official holiday instead of said paid leave.

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

9.05 FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Under this policy, the County will grant up to twelve (12) weeks (or up to twenty-six (26) weeks of military caregiver leave to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness) during a twelve (12) month period to eligible employees. The leave may be paid, unpaid or a combination of paid and unpaid leave, depending on the circumstances of the leave and as specified in this policy.

To qualify to take family or medical leave under this policy, the employee must meet all of the following conditions:

The employee must have worked for the County for twelve (12) months or fifty-two (52) weeks. The twelve (12) months or 52 weeks need not have been consecutive. Separate periods of employment will be counted, provided that the break in service does not exceed seven (7) years. Separate periods of employment will be counted if the break in service exceeds seven years due to National Guard or Reserve military service obligations or when there is a written agreement, including a collective bargaining agreement, stating the County's intention to rehire the employee after the service break. For eligibility purposes, an employee will be considered to have been employed for an entire week even if the employee was on the payroll for only part of a week or if the employee is on leave during the week.

The employee must have worked at least 1,250 hours during the twelve (12) month period immediately before the date when the leave is requested to commence. The principles established under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) determine the number of hours worked by an employee. The FLSA does not include time spent on paid or unpaid leave as hours worked. Consequently, these hours of leave should not be counted in determining the 1,250 hours eligibility test for an employee under FMLA.

The employee must work in a worksite where fifty (50) or more employees are employed by the County within seventy-five (75) miles of that office or worksite. The distance is to be calculated by using available transportation by the most direct route.

TYPE OF LEAVE COVERED

To qualify as FMLA leave under this policy, the employee must be taking leave for one of the reasons listed below:

1. The birth of a child and in order to care for that child.
2. The placement of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child.
3. To care for a spouse, child or parent with a serious health condition (described below).
4. The serious health condition (described below) of the employee.

An employee may take leave because of a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of the employee's position.

A serious health condition is defined as a condition that requires inpatient care at a hospital, hospice or residential medical care facility, including any period of incapacity or any subsequent treatment in connection with such inpatient care or a condition that requires continuing care by a licensed health care provider.

This policy covers illnesses of a serious and long-term nature, resulting in recurring or lengthy absences. 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 (7) days of the onset of the incapacity and a second visit within thirty (30) days of the incapacity would be considered a serious health condition. For chronic conditions requiring periodic health care visits for treatment, such visits must take place at least twice a year.

Employees with questions about this FMLA policy or the County's sick leave policy should consult with the Human Resources Coordinator.

If an employee takes paid sick leave for a condition that progresses into a serious health condition and the employee requests unpaid leave as provided under this policy, the County may designate all or some portion of related leave taken as leave under this policy, to the extent that the earlier leave meets the necessary qualifications.

5. Qualifying exigency leave for families of members of the National Guard and Reserves when the covered military member is on active duty or called to active duty in support of a contingency operation.

An employee whose spouse, son, daughter or parent either has been notified of an impending call or order to active military duty or who is already on active duty may take up to twelve (12) weeks of leave for reasons related to or affected by the family member's call-up or service.

The qualifying exigency must be one of the following:

- a) short-notice deployment,
- b) military events and activities,
- c) child care and school activities,
- d) financial and legal arrangements,
- e) counseling
- f) rest and recuperation,
- g) post-deployment activities and
- h) additional activities that arise out of active duty, provided that the County and employee agree, including agreement on timing and duration of the leave.

The leave may commence as soon as the individual receives the call-up notice. (Son or daughter for this type of FMLA leave is defined the same as for child for other types of FMLA leave except that the person does not have to be a minor.) This type of leave would be counted toward the employee's 12-week maximum of FMLA leave in a twelve (12) month period.

6. Military caregiver leave (also known as covered service member leave) to care for an ill or injured service member.

This leave may extend to up to twenty-six (26) weeks in a single twelve (12) month period for an employee to care for a spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin covered service member with a serious illness or injury incurred in the line of duty on active duty. Next of kin is defined as the closest blood relative of the injured or recovering service member.

AMOUNT OF LEAVE

An eligible employee can take up to twelve (12) weeks for the FMLA circumstances (1) through (5) above under this policy during any twelve (12) month period. The County will measure the twelve (12) month period as a rolling twelve (12) month period measured backward from the date an employee uses any leave under this policy. Each time an employee takes leave, the County will compute the amount of leave the employee has taken under this policy in the last twelve (12) months and subtract it from the twelve (12) weeks of available leave, and the balance remaining is the amount the employee is entitled to take at that time.

An eligible employee can take up to twenty-six (26) weeks for the FMLA circumstance (6) above (military caregiver leave) during a single twelve (12) month period. For this military caregiver leave, the County will measure the twelve (12) month period as a rolling twelve (12) month period measured forward. FMLA leave already taken for other FMLA circumstances will be deducted from the total of twenty-six (26) weeks available.

If a husband and wife both work for the County and each wishes to take leave for the birth of a child, adoption or placement of a child in foster care, or to care for a parent (but not a parent "in-law") with a serious health condition, the husband and wife may only take a combined total of twelve (12) weeks of leave. If a husband and wife both work for the County and each wishes to take leave to care for a covered injured or ill service member, the husband and wife may only take a combined total of twenty-six (26) weeks of leave.

EMPLOYEE STATUS AND BENEFITS DURING LEAVE

While an employee is on leave, the County will continue the employee's health benefits during the leave period at the same level and under the same conditions as if the employee had continued to work.

If the employee chooses not to return to work for reasons other than a continued serious health condition of the employee or the employee's family member or a circumstance beyond the employee's control, the County will require the employee to reimburse the County the amount it paid for the employee's health insurance premium during the leave period.

Under current County policy, if the employee pays a portion of the health care premium. While on paid leave, the County will continue to make payroll deductions to collect the employee's share of the premium. While on unpaid leave, the employee must continue to make this payment, either in person or by mail. The payment must be received by the County Treasurer by the 10th day of each month. If the payment is more than thirty (30) days late, the employee's health care coverage may be dropped for the duration of the leave. The County will provide fifteen (15) days' notification prior to the employee's loss of coverage.

If the employee contributes to a life insurance plan, the County will continue making payroll deductions while the employee is on paid leave. While the employee is on unpaid leave, the employee may request continuation of such benefits and pay his or her portion of the premiums, or the County may elect to maintain such benefits during the leave and pay the employee's share of the premium payments. If the employee does not continue these payments, the County may discontinue coverage during the leave. If the County maintains coverage, the County may recover the costs incurred for paying the employee's share of any premiums, whether or not the employee returns to work.

EMPLOYEE STATUS AFTER LEAVE

An employee who takes leave under this policy may be asked to provide a fitness for duty (FFD) clearance from the health care provider. This requirement will be included in the County's response to the FMLA request. Generally, an employee who takes FMLA leave will be able to return to the same

position or a position with equivalent status, pay, benefits and other employment terms. The position will be the same or one which is virtually identical in terms of pay, benefits and working conditions. The County may choose to exempt certain key employees from this requirement and not return them to the same or similar position.

USE OF PAID AND UNPAID LEAVE

An employee who is taking FMLA leave because of the employee's own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a family member must use all accrued leave prior to being eligible for unpaid leave. Accrued leave may be run concurrently with FMLA leave if the reason for the FMLA leave is covered by the established leave policy. Accrued leave will be used in the following order:

1. Sick
2. Compensatory
3. Vacation
4. Holiday

An employee who is using military FMLA leave for a qualifying exigency must use all accrued leave prior to being eligible for unpaid leave. An employee using FMLA military caregiver leave must also use all accrued leave prior to being eligible for unpaid leave.

INTERMITTENT LEAVE OR A REDUCED WORK SCHEDULE

The employee may take FMLA leave in twelve (12) consecutive weeks, may use the leave intermittently (take a day periodically when needed over the year) or, under certain circumstances, may use the leave to reduce the workweek or workday, resulting in a reduced hour schedule. In all cases, the leave may not exceed a total of twelve (12) workweeks (or twenty-six (26) workweeks to care for an injured or ill service member over a twelve (12) month period).

The County may temporarily transfer an employee to an available alternative position with equivalent pay and benefits if the alternative position would better accommodate the intermittent or reduced schedule, in instances of when leave for the employee or employee's family member is foreseeable and for planned medical treatment, including recovery from a serious health condition or to care for a child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care.

For the birth, adoption or foster care of a child, the County and the employee must mutually agree to the schedule before the employee may take the leave intermittently or work a reduced hour schedule. Leave for birth, adoption or foster care of a child must be taken within one year of the birth or placement of the child.

If the employee is taking leave for a serious health condition or because of the serious health condition of a family member, the employee should try to reach agreement with the County before taking intermittent leave or working a reduced hour schedule. If this is not possible, then the employee must prove that the use of the leave is medically necessary.

CERTIFICATION FOR THE EMPLOYEE'S SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITION

The County will require certification for the employee's serious health condition. The employee must respond to such a request within fifteen (15) days of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay. Failure to provide certification may result in a denial of continuation of leave. Medical certification will be provided using the DOL Certification of Health Care Provider for Employee's Serious Health Condition.

The County may directly contact the employee's health care provider for verification or clarification purposes using a health care professional, an Administrative Services professional, leave administrator or management official. The County will not use the employee's direct supervisor for this contact. Before the County makes this direct contact with the health care provider, the employee will be given an opportunity to resolve any deficiencies in the medical certification. In compliance with HIPAA Medical Privacy Rules, the County will obtain the employee's permission for clarification of individually identifiable health information.

The County has the right to ask for a second opinion if it has reason to doubt the certification. The County will pay for the employee to get a certification from a second doctor, which the County will select. The County may deny FMLA leave to an employee who refuses to release relevant medical records to the health care provider designated to provide a second or third opinion. If necessary to resolve a conflict between the original certification and the second opinion, the County will require the opinion of a third doctor. The County and the employee will mutually select the third doctor, and the County will pay for the opinion. This third opinion will be considered final. The employee will be provisionally entitled to leave and benefits under the FMLA pending the second and/or third opinion.

CERTIFICATION FOR THE FAMILY MEMBER'S SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITION

The County will require certification for the family member's serious health condition. The employee must respond to such a request within fifteen (15) days of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay. Failure to provide certification may result in a denial of continuation of leave. Medical certification will be provided using the DOL Certification of Health Care Provider for Family Member's Serious Health Condition.

The County may directly contact the employee's family member's health care provider for verification or clarification purposes using a health care professional, an Administrative Services professional, leave administrator or management official. The County will not use the employee's direct supervisor for this contact. Before the County makes this direct contact with the health care provider, the employee will be given an opportunity to resolve any deficiencies in the medical certification. In compliance with HIPAA Medical Privacy Rules, the County will obtain the employee's family member's permission for clarification of individually identifiable health information.

The County has the right to ask for a second opinion if it has reason to doubt the certification. The County will pay for the employee's family member to get a certification from a second doctor, which the County will select. The County may deny FMLA leave to an employee whose family member refuses to release relevant medical records to the health care provider designated to provide a second or third opinion. If necessary to resolve a conflict between the original certification and the second opinion, the County will require the opinion of a third doctor. The County and the employee will mutually select the third doctor, and the County will pay for the opinion. This third opinion will be considered final. The employee will be provisionally entitled to leave and benefits under the FMLA pending the second and/or third opinion.

CERTIFICATION OF QUALIFYING EXIGENCY FOR MILITARY FAMILY LEAVE

The County will require certification of the qualifying exigency for military family leave. The employee must respond to such a request within fifteen (15) days of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay. Failure to provide certification may result in a denial of continuation of leave. This certification will be provided using the DOL Certification of Qualifying Exigency for Military Family Leave.

CERTIFICATION FOR SERIOUS INJURY OR ILLNESS OF COVERED SERVICE MEMBER FOR MILITARY FAMILY LEAVE

The County will require certification for the serious injury or illness of the covered service member. The employee must respond to such a request within fifteen (15) days of the request or provide a reasonable

explanation for the delay. Failure to provide certification may result in a denial of continuation of leave. This certification will be provided using the DOL Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of Covered Service member.

RECERTIFICATION

The County may request recertification for the serious health condition of the employee or the employee's family member no more frequently than every thirty (30) days and only when circumstances have changed significantly, or if the County receives information casting doubt on the reason given for the absence, or if the employee seeks an extension of his or her leave. Otherwise, the County may request recertification for the serious health condition of the employee or the employee's family member every six (6) months in connection with an FMLA absence. The County may provide the employee's health care provider with the employee's attendance records and ask whether need for leave is consistent with the employee's serious health condition.

PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING FMLA LEAVE

All employees requesting FMLA leave must provide verbal or written notice of the need for the leave to Human Resources Coordinator. Within five (5) business days after the employee has provided this notice, the Human Resources Coordinator will complete and provide the employee with the DOL Notice of Eligibility and Rights

When the need for the leave is foreseeable, the employee must provide the County with at least thirty (30) days' notice. When an employee becomes aware of a need for FMLA leave less than thirty (30) days in advance, the employee must provide notice of the need for the leave either the same day or the next business day. When the need for FMLA leave is not foreseeable, the employee must comply with the County's usual and customary notice and procedural requirements for requesting leave, absent unusual circumstances.

DESIGNATION OF FMLA LEAVE

Within five (5) business days after the employee has submitted the appropriate certification form, the Human Resources Coordinator will complete and provide the employee with a written response to the employee's request for FMLA leave using the DOL Designation Notice.

The County may designate extended leave as FMLA leave. The designation of leave will occur when the employee has used three days of leave, with or without pay, as a result of the catastrophic illness or injury.

INTENT TO RETURN TO WORK FROM FMLA LEAVE

On a basis that does not discriminate against employees on FMLA leave; the County may require an employee on FMLA leave to report periodically on the employee's status and intent to return to work.

9.06 HOLIDAYS

All regular full time employees of the County shall be eligible to receive eight (8) hours with pay for each official holiday.

The official paid holidays for the County shall be determined by Commissioners' Court each fiscal year. Changes to the holiday schedule may be made at the discretion of Commissioners' Court.

If a regular full time employee is required to work on an official holiday, the employee shall be paid for the hours worked and given up to eight (8) hours of holiday leave.

If a holiday occurs on an employee's regular day off, the employee shall be given eight (8) hours of holiday leave.

If a holiday occurs while an employee is on vacation or sick leave, the employee shall use the official holiday instead of said leave.

An employee, who is on unpaid FMLA leave, worker's comp leave, or personal leave of absence without pay, shall not be paid for any official holidays occurring during such leave.

9.07 COMPENSATORY TIME

Overtime shall be all hours worked in excess of forty (40) during the workweek, which is defined in Section 7.00, except law enforcement personnel (See Section 9.07.03)

A non-exempt full time employee not involved in law enforcement who works overtime during a workweek shall be given compensatory time at a rate of one and one-half (1 ½) hours compensatory time for each hour worked over forty (40) hours during the workweek.

Patrol deputies and correction officers work a fourteen (14) day work period and must work over eighty-six (86) hours before being eligible to receive compensatory time, under the 207(k) provisions of FLSA.

All overtime must be authorized by the supervisor before being worked, except in emergency situations.

When requesting vacation, if the employee has compensatory time accrued, then it will be charged to compensatory time first to the extent available and the remainder to accrued vacation, except for FMLA.

Each employee shall be responsible for recording any compensatory time taken and/or earned within a pay period on the time record for that pay period.

Employees may check their current compensatory time balance at the Human Resource office at any time during normal working hours.

The County may, when funds are available, buy all or part of any employee's comp time balance

At the time of termination, death or retirement, accrued, unused comp time will be paid to the employee or the estate at the regular rate of pay at the time of separation.

9.08 MILITARY LEAVE

Employees who are members of the State Military Forces or members of any of the Reserve Components of the Armed Forces of the United States are entitled to leave of absence from their duties, without loss of time, seniority or benefits on all days during which they are engaged in authorized training or duty ordered by proper authority, not to exceed fifteen (15) working days in any one (1) federal fiscal year (October 1 - September 30). Employees will continue to receive pay from the County. Military leave in excess of fifteen (15) working days will be charged to applicable available leave or leave without pay.

Employees who are ordered to extended active duty with the state or federal military forces are entitled to all of the reemployment rights and benefits provided by law upon their release from active duty.

An employee requesting military leave shall provide the supervisor with a set of orders within three (3) days after receiving them.

The County complies with all state and federal regulations regarding military leave and service such as the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Act (USERRA).

9.09 JURY/CIVIL LEAVE

Regular full and part time employees shall receive the normal pay for the period called for jury duty which includes both the jury selection process and, if selected, the time the employee actually spends serving on the jury.

Employees may retain any fees received for performing jury duty.

All regular full time employees subpoenaed or requested to attend court to appear as a witness or to testify in some official capacity on behalf of the County shall be entitled to leave with pay for such period of the court attendance may require.

If an employee is absent from work to appear in private litigation in as a principal party, the time off shall be charged to available applicable leave or leave without pay.

Employees are entitled to jury/civil leave for the purpose of voting.

When an employee has fulfilled the reason for the jury/civil leave, he or she must report to the County for duty for the remainder of the workday.

9.10 FUNERAL LEAVE

A supervisor is authorized to grant funeral leave to a full time employee as a result of a death of a member of the immediate family.

Immediate family is defined as

- Spouse of employee
- Father and/or Father-in-Law
- Mother and/or Mother-in-Law
- Sister and/or Sister-in-Law
- Brother and/or Brother-in-Law
- Children of employee and spouse
- Grandparents of employee and spouse
- Grandchildren of employee and spouse
- If applicable, the guardianship of a person or persons by employee

There may be a maximum of twenty-four (24) hours funeral leave per occurrence.

Employees are required to document all funeral leave taken on time record.

At the discretion of the elected/appointed official, an office may be closed to allow employees to attend funerals of county officials or county employees or the funerals of immediate family members of county officials and employees. Employees not attending must remain on duty at their work place.

Employees may be allowed, up to a minimum of 8 hours, to attend the funeral of a relative who is not a member of the immediate family or funeral of a friend.

In extraordinary circumstances, the Commissioners' Court, may declare the temporary closure of County offices.

9.11 INJURY LEAVE

For information on occupational disability or injury leave for bona fide on-the-job, work-related injuries, see sections in this manual under the main heading Health and Safety (Section 12.00).

9.12 ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE

In cases of bad weather (ice, hurricanes, flooding, etc.), Commissioners' Court will determine the closure of County offices. The safety of employees and possible endangerment in attempting to report to work will be considered. Should a determination be made that reporting to work will endanger County employees; employees will be fully compensated for approved time away from work during normal working hours.

Employees are to contact the supervisor and obtain information concerning closures through the County website (<http://www.calhouncotx.org>) or local forums of the media (radio and television stations). Under this policy employee will not be compensated for time away from work that was not declared a bad weather day by Commissioners' Court.

9.13 LEAVE OF ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY

Leave of absence without pay is an approved absence from duty in a non-pay status. A leave of absence lasting longer than thirty (30) days must be approved in advance by the Department Head and the Commissioners' Court. Extensions of leave shall be authorized by the Department Head and the Commissioners' Court in no more than one (1) month intervals.

Granting a leave of absence without pay is at the discretion of the Department Head. Such leave is not authorized unless all applicable accrued paid leave has been exhausted and there is a reasonable expectation that the employee will return to employment with the County at the end of the approved period. Approval of the leave must be documented, with a copy of the documentation placed in the employee's personnel file in the Human Resources Coordinator's Office. Employees on leave of absence without pay receive no compensation and accrue no benefits, holidays, vacation or sick leave. However, benefits and seniority are retained during leaves of absence unless otherwise prohibited by the terms or provisions of the benefit programs. Medical insurance can be continued if the employee pays the premiums (including the County's portion) in full in a timely manner.

A leave of absence without pay may be revoked upon receipt of evidence that the cause for granting the leave was misrepresented or has ceased to exist.

A leave of absence without pay may be appropriate for the following reasons:

1. Education purposes when successful completion will benefit the County; or
2. Public service assignments; or
3. Personal exchange programs which emphasize intergovernmental relations; or

4. Any other reason which, in the opinion of the Department Head, merits a leave of absence without pay.

An employee on leave without pay must contact the appropriate County Department Head at least monthly to report on status. Failure to provide required status reports or to contact the office on the schedule required by the Department Head is grounds for revoking the leave and for taking disciplinary action.

A summary of the basis for the decision to grant or deny an unpaid leave of absence and the terms of the leave must be prepared by the Department Head, or designee, and placed in the employee's personnel file in Human Resources.

Upon returning to work after an authorized leave of absence without pay, an employee receives an adjusted employment date and adjusted anniversary date which reflect the period of time that the employee used for the leave of absence. This adjusted date will be used for the purpose of calculating vacation leave accrual and other benefits that may be based on longevity.

9.14 ABANDONMENT OF POSITION

Unauthorized absence from work may result in termination at the discretion of the official or Department Head.

10.00 PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

10.01 CORRECTIVE ACTION

The County's objective is to establish and maintain standards of employee conduct and supervisory practices that will, in the interest of the County and its employees, support and promote effective County operations. Such supervisory practices include administering corrective action when employee conduct or performance problems arise. Major elements of this policy include:

1. Constructive effort by the supervisor to help employees achieve full satisfactory standards of conduct and job performance;
2. Correcting employee shortcomings or negative behavior to the extent required;
3. Notice to the employees through communicating this policy that discharge will result from continued or gross violation of employee standards of conduct or unsatisfactory job performance;
4. Written documentation of disciplinary warnings given and corrective action taken; and
5. Documentation of corrective action will become part of the employee's personnel record.

10.02 OPTIONS FOR CORRECTIVE ACTION

Depending on the facts and circumstances involved in each situation, the official, Department Head or supervisor may choose to begin corrective action at any step, up to and including a recommendation for immediate dismissal.

- **Oral Warning** - For infractions the County deems to be minor, the employee should at a minimum be issued an oral warning. If the situation does not improve within a reasonable time as

determined by the official, Department Head or supervisor, the measure may be repeated or a more serious option implemented.

- **Written Warning** - For repeated minor infractions, or a more substantial infraction, the employee should at a minimum be issued a written warning notice. If the situation does not improve immediately and is not sustained, steps may be taken to terminate the employment.

The written warning should be prepared following a corrective action discussion with the employee. The written warning should include:

The policy or rule violated or a description of the unacceptable behavior;

1. Date(s), time(s) and location(s) of the offense;
2. The facts surrounding the incident;
3. Specific actions the employee must take to correct the matter;
4. The time frame (if applicable); and
5. The consequences if not corrected. The employee will be given an opportunity to comment in writing and should be asked to sign the notice, acknowledging the receipt. Failure by the employee to sign the written warning form does not remove the disciplinary action.

Suspension - In certain instances, it is appropriate for employees to be suspended. These instances could include but are not limited to:

- a) Prior to terminating an employee for performance related issues;
 - b) Events compel a supervisor to take immediate action when discharge appears possible, pending an investigation. During a suspension the employee will be required to leave County premises immediately. A suspension/investigation will last no longer than three (3) days, except in highly unusual circumstances.
 - c) Suspension may be with or without pay at the discretion of the department head.
- **Termination** - For infractions management deems to be sufficiently serious, or continued failure to respond appropriately to prior corrective action, termination of employment is appropriate.

The Human Resources Coordinator and the County Treasurer's Office must be notified **immediately** of all suspensions and terminations.

11.00 SEPARATIONS

11.01 TYPES OF SEPARATIONS

All separations of employees are designated as one of the following types:

1. Resignation;
2. Retirement;
3. Reduction in force (layoff);
4. Dismissal with or without cause;
5. Disability;
6. Death

Employees, who separate employment with the County, as described above, are not eligible for rehire for a period of sixty (60) days.

A terminated employee rehired will accrue vacation and longevity according to the adjusted hire date. Medical and life benefits will be available after a sixty (60) day waiting period.

11.02 RESIGNATION

The County requests that an employee who intends to resign provide the Department Head with ten (10) day's advance notice of the resignation. A Department Head who intends to resign should give thirty (30) days' notice to Commissioners' Court.

11.03 RETIREMENT

The same notice requested for resignation apply in the case of retirement except that a longer period of advance notice may be required to start retirement payments promptly.

11.04 REDUCTION IN FORCE (LAYOFF)

An employee shall be separated when the position is abolished, or when there is either a lack of funds or a lack of work.

While such action is avoided whenever possible, employees of the County may be laid off where a Department Head deems it necessary because of shortages of funds or work, the abolition of a job or jobs, other material changes in the organization, or for other reasons which are beyond the control of the employee or employer.

A reduction in force shall not reflect discredit on an employee or on the ability to do the job.

Whenever possible, employees who are laid off in one department may be integrated into other departments by transfer.

11.05 DISMISSAL WITH OR WITHOUT CAUSE

All employees are employed at will and may at any time during their employment, be terminated with or without notice, for any reason or no reason.

11.06 DISABILITY

A separation for disability shall be any situation in which the employee is unable to perform the essential duties of the job and no reasonable accommodation is found.

11.07 DEATH

If an employee dies while in the service of the County, the designated beneficiary or estate shall receive all earned pay and payable benefits.

11.08 TERMINATION PAY

If an employee leaves service of the County, final pay by paycheck (not direct deposit) shall include:

1. All hours worked but for which payment has not been received;
2. Where applicable, compensatory time which has been earned but not yet used;
3. Any leave time for which payment is due under the provisions of these policies; or
4. With written authorization, deductions for any indebtedness to the County which the employee may have incurred but which has not been paid.

12.00 HEALTH AND SAFETY

12.01 SAFETY POLICY

It is the policy of the County to make a concentrated effort to provide healthful and safe working conditions for all of its employees.

12.02 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES AND REPORTS

Employees are responsible for conducting their work activities in a manner that is protective of their own health and safety, as well as those of other employees.

An employee must report every on-the-job accident, no matter how minor, to the supervisor immediately, if able. The supervisor is responsible for filing a written accident report **immediately** with the Human Resources Coordinator's office.

Failure to report an on-the-job injury, no matter how minor, is grounds for disciplinary action.

12.03 EMPLOYEE SAFETY SUGGESTIONS

An employee will report immediately to the immediate supervisor any conditions that, in the employee's judgment, threaten the health and safety of employees or visitors.

Employees are encouraged to make suggestions to supervisors for improvements that would make the County a safer or more healthful place to work.

12.04 ON-THE-JOB INJURIES

The County provides workers' compensation insurance for all of its employees, unless declined in writing. This insurance provides medical expenses and a weekly payment if an employee is absent from work because of a bona fide, **on-the-job work-related injury** for more than seven (7) days. Employees who are absent from work because of a bona fide, on-the-job work-related injury for more than seven (7) days are considered on injury leave.

All workers' compensation insurance claim forms must be submitted to the Human Resources Coordinator's Office **immediately** for appropriate action to be taken.

An employee who sustains a bona fide, on-the-job work-related injury may seek medical attention from a Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) approved medical facility or physician. After a medical

professional has been selected, an employee may not change medical providers without the permission of the Texas Department of Insurance. Additional information regarding this requirement is available in the Human Resources Coordinator's office.

Drug and alcohol testing is required for employees involved in a vehicle or heavy equipment accident. For all other types of accidents, testing may be required if medical attention is received. Please refer to Section 12.05 for detailed Drug Free Workplace Policy.

The County encourages employees to return to work as soon as they are able to do so. An employee returning to work must submit a physician's statement of medical condition and release to return to work. As determined by the Department Head, at the County's expense, an employee may be required to submit to examination by an independent physician.

Injury leave begins on the first scheduled workday of absence due to an on-the-job injury and continues until the employee returns to work, eligibility expires, or the employee is removed from injury leave coverage by the County.

When an employee sustains a bona fide on-the-job work-related injury which renders the employee unfit for performing the duties of the job, the employee may use paid leave, if available, for the first seven (7) calendar days.

Employees engaged in law enforcement duties who sustain a bona fide on-the-job work-related injury in the course of their official law enforcement duties are not required to use paid leave for the first seven (7) days and will receive full pay less legal deductions from the County, pursuant of Texas Constitution, Article III, Section 52e.

Injury leave may be terminated at any time without prior notice. The Department Head will terminate the injury leave upon receipt of evidence that the employee, while able to return to work, has not done so.

To continue medical or dental insurance when the employee is on injury leave and no longer receiving a regular paycheck, the employee must pay the employee's portion of these insurance premiums to the County on the schedule established by the County Treasurer's office.

Injuries caused by willful intent and attempt to injure self or to unlawfully injure another, intoxication, or act of a third party for personal reasons are excluded specifically from coverage by injury leave with pay.

If a County employee is injured on the job while in the course of employment outside employment with the County, the employee may not file a workers' compensation claim against the County for benefits related to the injury. and

While on leave because of a bona fide, on-the-job work-related injury, each time the employee sees the doctor for consultation or treatment, a progress report must be provided to the Department Head or designee who will forward the report to the Human Resource Coordinator's office. Any change in the employee's condition which might affect entitlement to workers' compensation payments must also be reported to the Department Head or designee and the County Treasurer. In addition, the injured employee must contact the supervisor periodically, on a specific schedule, to report on condition. Failure to provide the required medical status reports or to contact the supervisor on the schedule required by the Department Head or designee, is grounds for revoking the employee's leave and for taking disciplinary action.

A written statement from the attending physician certifying the employee has been released to return to work and specifying the type(s) of work capable of performing as well as any limitation(s) must be received by the County before an employee may return to work. All employees on injury leave must return to work after approval of either the employee's attending physician or an independent physician

paid by the County. Failure to return to work when directed will result in appropriate disciplinary action. Upon receipt of a release to return to work, the County may require the employee to submit to a medical examination to determine whether the employee can perform the essential functions of the position, with or without reasonable accommodation. The County's efforts to reasonably accommodate the employee will be conducted in accordance with applicable law.

During the course of an on-the-job injury leave of absence, if an employee is released by the physician for transitional duty, the employee's job or alternative job assignment(s) will be evaluated for a determination of whether a temporary position is available in which the County can use the employee's limited services for an interim period of time.

If no acceptable transitional duty assignment can be found, the employee will be placed on inactive status until released by the physician and workers' compensation to return to the previous job.

An employee who is able to return to work on transitional duty status may be required to work in a different department and perform duties not contained within current job duties. An employee assigned to transitional duty status and performing different duties may be paid according to the level of pay that is appropriate for the transitional duty job assignment, except deputies and jailers. A transitional duty assignment should not exceed ninety (90) days. In addition, the employee will receive workers' compensation payments in a reduced amount.

At the time of final release or settlement of a workers' compensation claim, the employee must furnish the County with a certificate from the employee's physician stating the status of the Employee's physical condition and an anticipated return to work date.

12.05 DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY

The County has a responsibility to provide and maintain a safe and healthy workplace free from the influence of alcohol, inhalants and illegal drugs for its employees. The County will vigorously comply with the requirements of the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988, Art. 8308-7.10 (VTCS) 1992 and all applicable drug testing regulations issued by the Department of Transportation (DOT).

The County recognizes that the status of an employee's health affects his/her job performance and safety. The County also recognizes that drug, alcohol and inhalant abuse ranks as one of the major health problems in the world and adversely affects an employee's performance and safety on the job. Therefore, it is necessary and required by law for the County to provide a drug-free, alcohol-free and inhalant-free working environment for its employees.

Compliance with the County's Drug Free Workplace policy is a condition of employment for all employees hired prior to and after the effective date of this policy and any revisions thereafter.

Compliance with the County's Commercial Driver's License Drug and Alcohol Testing section of the Drug Free Workplace Policy is a condition of employment as a driver/operator for employees required by the County to maintain a CDL.

This policy applies to all County employees, including part time and temporary employees. From time to time, the County shall formulate administrative procedures to accompany the rules of this section. Such procedures shall be legally binding on all County employees and shall be available for copying and inspection in the Human Resources Coordinator's Office. Department of Transportation and other federal regulations may apply to some County employees.

FITNESS FOR DUTY

An employee is not fit to safely and fully perform his duties if:

1. He/she reports for duty while under the influence of alcohol, inhalants or any illegal drug; or
2. He/she uses alcohol, inhalants or any illegal drug while on duty; or
3. He/she reports for duty while using any controlled substance which impairs his/her ability to safely and fully perform assigned duties, even if the controlled substance is prescribed by a physician.

Employees who are not fit for duty will not be permitted to work. A supervisor must relieve the employee of duty and take him/her to the County test facility for testing and/or evaluation.

Employees must report to their supervisor the side effects of any prescription or non-prescription drugs, which may affect their fitness for duty. The supervisor may send the employee to the County test facility for an evaluation of fitness for duty.

DEFINITIONS UNDER THIS POLICY

1. **Alcohol** - "Alcohol" means the intoxicating agent in beverage alcohol, ethyl alcohol (ethanol), or any other low molecular weight alcohol's including methyl and isopropyl alcohol.
2. **Alcohol Concentration** - "Alcohol Concentration" (or content) means **alcohol in a volume** of breath expressed in terms of grams of alcohol per 210 liters of breath as indicated by an evidential breath test or by weight per volume in a blood test.
3. **Alcohol Use** - "Alcohol Use" means the consumption of any beverage, mixture, or preparation, including any medication containing alcohol.
4. **Breath Alcohol Technician (BAT)** - An individual who instructs and assists individuals in the alcohol testing process and operates an EBT.
5. **County Premises Or Work Sites** - "County premises or WORK SITES" include all property, buildings, structures, job sites (where an employee is working), parking lots, and means of transportation owned, leased, or otherwise used for County business including motor vehicles, equipment, or machinery.
6. **Commercial Drivers License Holders** - The County requires County employees with certain job descriptions to maintain a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). The Department Of Transportation (DOT) regulations (49 CFR Parts 40 and 382) require the County to have a special, mandatory controlled substance and alcohol testing policy for these employees. All applicable drug and alcohol testing procedures under this policy shall meet DOT regulations. A copy of 49 CFR Parts 40 and 82 shall be available for copying and inspection in the County Auditor's Office.
7. **Controlled Substance** - A "controlled substance" includes illegal drugs plus any other substances covered by Schedules I through V of the Federal Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 801 et seq.) or the Texas Controlled Substances Act (Chapter 481, Texas Health and Safety Code). Controlled substances include amphetamines, barbiturates, methadone, benzodiazepines, methaqualone, morphine, codeine, and anabolic steroids. A controlled substance is "unauthorized" if the employee does not have a valid prescription for that substance at the time of its use or possession.
8. **Conviction** - "Conviction" means the finding of guilt including a plea of nolo contendere or imposition of sentence, or both by any judicial party charged with responsibility to determine violations of the federal or state criminal drug statutes.
9. **Drug Paraphernalia** - "Drug paraphernalia" is equipment, a product or material of any kind mentioned in Vernon's Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 481 (Texas Controlled Substances Act), Sec. 481.002(17).
10. **Evidential Breath Testing Device (EBT)** - A device approved by the NHTSA for the evidential testing of breath for alcohol.
11. **Failing A Drug Test** - "Failing a drug test" is defined as confirmation of initial test results which shows positive evidence of the presence of a prohibited substance in the body.

12. **Illegal Drugs** - "Illegal drug" includes heroin, cocaine, crack cocaine, cannabinoids (marijuana, hashish, THC), and PCP (phencyclidine), LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) or any other controlled substance not validly prescribed by a physician.
13. **Inhalant** - Those volatile chemicals and their isomers as listed in Section 484.002 of the Texas Health and Safety Code and abusable glue and aerosol paint as defined in Section 485.001 of the Texas Health and Safety Code.
14. **Mandatory Substance Abuse Program** - A treatment or counseling program in which an employee is enrolled and must successfully complete in accordance with disciplinary action taken by an employee's supervisor in lieu of termination.
15. **Medical Review Officer (MRO)** - A licensed physician with knowledge of substance abuse disorders and training to interpret and evaluate confirmed positive test results.
16. **Passing A Drug Test** - "Passing a drug test" is defined as initial or confirmation test results which do not show evidence of the presence of an illegal drug or unauthorized controlled substance in the body.
17. **Safety Sensitive Functions** - Any of those on-duty functions which include:
 - a) Time waiting to be dispatched to operate a Commercial Motor Vehicle or equipment (CMV);
 - b) Inspecting, servicing or conditioning a CMV;
 - c) Driving or operating a CMV;
 - d) Loading, unloading a CMV, supervising or assisting in the loading or unloading, remaining in readiness to operate a CMV; or
 - e) Repairing a CMV.
18. **Shy Lung** - "Shy Lung" is the condition in which an individual cannot blow the required volume of air into alcohol test equipment for a breath alcohol test. In such circumstances, the employee will be required to have a blood sample taken for testing purposes.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

Employees who have substance abuse problems are encouraged to obtain assistance for their problems before they are required to submit to drug, inhalant and/or alcohol tests. The County is concerned about the health of its employees and it supports sound treatment efforts for chemical dependency. Normal employee benefits such as sick leave, vacation leave, and group medical plans may be used during the treatment process to the extent applicable and available. No employee's job will be jeopardized if he/she conscientiously seeks assistance for substance abuse voluntarily before he/she is required to submit to a drug, inhalant and/or alcohol test. This option will be offered once during employment. In order to obtain management cooperation in an assistance program for chemical dependency, the employee will be required to:

1. Recognize and admit that he/she has an alcohol, inhalant or drug problem;
2. Ask for assistance in the form of employee benefits;
3. Accept and understand that if he/she does not correct the problem and maintain satisfactory job performance, he/she will be subject to discharge;
4. Submit to drug, inhalant and/or alcohol tests, both urine and/or breath and blood tests, at the beginning of the treatment program, at periodic intervals during the treatment program and at the end of the treatment program. Such drug, inhalant and/or alcohol tests must show a declining presence of drugs, inhalants and/or alcohol in his/her body as the treatment program is conducted; and
5. Submit to an interview and physical examination by a physician to determine his/her fitness for duty, such licensed physician will be appointed by the County.

In obtaining counseling for his/her chemical dependency problem, the employee will be fully protected from discipline if he/she continues to follow the requirements of this Section. However, this does not preclude the County's right to administer discipline, including termination for on-the-job conduct or other grounds, even though it is related to the use of drugs, inhalants and/or alcohol. The employee must also be fit for duty at all times when he/she is on-the-job for the County. Information regarding an employee's

personal problems will be kept in strict confidence, and information will only be released on a need-to-know basis unless required by law or in defense of the County.

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES AND VIOLATIONS UNDER POLICY

This policy prohibits:

1. Use, possession, manufacture, distribution or sale of illegal drugs, or drug paraphernalia by employees.
2. Unlawful use, possession, manufacture, distribution or dispensing of controlled substances by employees.
3. Unauthorized use or possession of alcohol by employees.
4. Unauthorized use or possession of inhalants by employees.
 - a. Items 1, 2, 3 and/or 4 apply to employees while they are:
 5. On any County premises or work sites while conducting County business; or
 6. Operating or occupying any County vehicle at any time; or
 7. During the employee's working hours including lunch and break times.
 8. Unauthorized storing of any illegal drug, drug paraphernalia, unauthorized controlled substance, unauthorized inhalants, or alcohol in a locker, desk, vehicle, equipment or other repository on County premises or work sites.
 9. Being under the influence of alcohol, unauthorized inhalants, or any unauthorized controlled substance or illegal drug while on duty or reporting to work.
 10. Unauthorized possession or use of alcohol, inhalants or the possession, use, manufacture, distribution, or sale of illegal drugs or unauthorized controlled substances off County premises or work sites during off duty hours which affects the employee's ability to safely and fully perform assigned job duties, renders the employee at risk to self or others at work, or which brings discredit upon the County of the public service.
 11. Switching or altering any urine sample submitted for testing.
 12. Refusal to consent to testing and submit a specimen for testing when required under this policy. Consent is indicated by signing any form required by the County, County physician or laboratory collecting the specimen for testing.
 13. Refusal to submit to an inspection of any desk, locker, or other County property under an employee's control when asked to do so by a supervisor.
 14. Failure to meet requirements of any mandatory substance abuse treatment or counseling program in which an employee is enrolled.
 15. Conviction under any criminal drug statute for a violation occurring in the workplace.
 16. Public conduct at any time involving alcohol, or illegal drugs or unauthorized controlled substances resulting in arrest or conviction under circumstances which bring discredit upon the County or the public service.
 17. Failure to notify the County of any conviction under any criminal drug statute within five (5) days of the conviction.
 18. Failure to report a conviction for driving while intoxicated for violations occurring on or off County premises while on duty.
 19. Failure to report to the supervisor the side effects of a prescription or non-prescription drug, which may impair the employee's behavior or physical or mental ability to safely and fully perform assigned duties.
 20. Failure to keep prescribed medicine in its original container or to provide other proof of identification of drug prescription and prescribing physician.
 21. Refusing to sign a statement agreeing to comply with the County's Drug Free Workplace Policy.
 22. Failure of a County employee to report the use or possession of an illegal drug or unauthorized controlled substance, unauthorized inhalant and/or alcohol by another County employee or the

existence of an unauthorized alcoholic beverage, unauthorized inhalant, illegal drug or controlled substance in any County vehicle, machinery, or equipment.

23. Reporting for duty while "on call" status while under the influence of alcohol, inhalants or any illegal drug or unauthorized controlled substance and/or the recurring inability to report to work as required in a condition to safely and fully perform assigned duties.
24. Failing to adhere to provisions of any agreement executed by the employee, which requires treatment, or counseling for alcohol or drug abuse.

CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATION OF THIS POLICY

The following violations of this policy will result in automatic and mandatory termination upon the first offense:

1. Use, possession, manufacture, distribution or sale of any illegal drug, drug paraphernalia, or unauthorized controlled substance while on duty, reporting to work, or on work sites. Illegal substances will be confiscated and turned over to the appropriate law enforcement agency.
2. Operating a County vehicle, motor driving equipment, machinery, or personal vehicle while on County business while under the influence of alcohol, inhalants or any illegal drug or unauthorized controlled substance at any time.
3. Unauthorized use or possession of alcohol when reporting for duty, while on duty or while occupying any County vehicle or personal vehicle including lunch or other break periods.

CONDITION OF EMPLOYMENT

APPLICANTS: During post-employment screening, applicants will be advised that they are subject to drug testing. Any job offer will be contingent on passing a drug test (negative results). Applicants will be required to sign a consent form for such testing.

Applicants who fail the test (confirmed positive results) will not be allowed to reapply for twelve (12) months after the date of the test.

TESTING REQUIREMENTS

The County, at its discretion, may have designated personnel use non-instrumented drug and/or alcohol test devices to provide, rapid drug and/or alcohol test results. These "rapid test" devices have been certified as being as accurate as standard, initial laboratory test equipment. The "rapid test" devices will only be used to screen out negative test results. Positive results will require additional samples, which will be analyzed using standard laboratory testing equipment and following standard laboratory testing procedures as described below.

Standard testing and analysis for drugs, inhalants and/or alcohol shall be performed by a properly licensed and certified laboratory approved by the Commissioners' Court. DOT required chain-of-custody procedures will be followed to account for the integrity of each urine or blood sample by tracking its handling and storage from point of specimen collection to final disposition of the specimen.

The initial drug test (also known as a screening test) shall be an enzyme immunoassay screen (EMIT) to eliminate "negative" urine specimens from further consideration.

If the initial drug test indicates a positive result, a confirmation test by gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS) will be used to confirm the presence of a specific drug or metabolite. The confirmation test shall be independent of the initial test and uses a different technique and chemical principle from that of the initial test in order to ensure reliability and accuracy. For classes of drugs where GC/MS is not an approved confirmation procedure, an alternative confirmation test will be used.

The initial test for alcohol shall be performed by a Blood Alcohol Technician (BAT) using an Evidential Blood Testing device approved by the National Highway Traffic Administration (NHTSA). Two (2) breath tests are required to determine if a person has a prohibited alcohol concentration. A screening test is conducted first. Results less than 0.02 percent concentration are considered a "negative" test.

If the concentration of alcohol is 0.02 or higher, a second or confirmation test must be conducted. The employee and the BAT must complete the alcohol testing form to ensure that results are properly recorded. The confirmation test, if required, must be conducted using an Evidential Breath Testing device that prints out the results, date, time, a sequential test number and the name and serial number of the EBT to ensure the reliability of the results.

If an individual cannot blow the required volume of air into alcohol test equipment for a breath alcohol test, the employee will be required to have a blood sample taken for testing purposes. The initial blood alcohol test shall be an Enzymatic Assay-ADH screen test to eliminate "negative" blood specimens from further consideration. If the initial blood alcohol test indicates a positive result (0.02 or greater), a confirmation test by gas chromatography will be used to confirm the level of alcohol. The confirmation test shall be independent of the initial test and uses a different technique and chemical principle from that of the initial test in order to ensure reliability and accuracy.

The following drug testing will be conducted under this policy:

PRE-EMPLOYMENT:

1. All job offers are contingent upon selected applicant passing a drug test.
2. All applicants for CDL positions, including new hires, promotions, and transfers must test negative for both alcohol and drug screening, and receive DOT training before they can perform safety sensitive duties. In addition, the County shall obtain, pursuant to an applicant's consent, information on the applicant's tests with a concentration of 0.04 or greater, positive controlled substances test results, and refusals to be tested, within the past two (2) years which are maintained by the applicant's previous employers. If an applicant refuses to sign the release form, he will not be offered employment with the County. This information must be obtained and reviewed by the County no later than fourteen (14) calendar days after the first time a driver performs safety sensitive function for an employer. If the County learns from a previous employer that the driver tested positive for drugs, had an alcohol test result of 0.04 or greater, or refused to be tested, the driver cannot perform safety sensitive functions until the County has evidence that the driver has met the return-to-duty requirements. The County must have evidence that the driver was evaluated by a substance abuse professional, completed any required counseling, passed a return-to-duty test, and has been subject to any required follow-up testing.

REASONABLE SUSPICION:

All employees shall be required to submit to drug, inhalant and/or alcohol tests, if the employee's supervisor and/or Department Head has a reasonable suspicion based on specific, articulate, and/or observable acts that the employees are in violation of the rules of this section or any other disciplinary rule of the County relating to drug, inhalant and/or alcohol use. A reasonable suspicion may be based on but not limited to the following criteria:

1. Observable phenomena such as direct observation of drug, inhalant and/or alcohol use or possession or physical- symptoms of being under the influence of a drug, inhalant and/or alcohol;
2. A pattern of abnormal or erratic behavior, including an on-the-job accident.

3. Arrest or conviction of a drug, inhalant and/or alcohol related offense on-the-job or off-the-job or the identification of an employee as the focus of a criminal investigation into illegal drug possession, use or trafficking;
4. Information provided either by reliable and credible sources or information, which is independently corroborated;
5. Newly discovered evidence that an employee has tampered with a previous drug, inhalants and/or alcohol test; or
6. Possession of drug paraphernalia.

All specific, articulate, and/or observable facts which form the basis of reasonable suspicion shall be reduced to writing by the supervisor and/or Department Head and/or witness in a timely manner, but no later than twenty-four (24) hours from the time of the event or incident in question, and submitted to, the Human Resources Coordinator for review for approval of drug, inhalant and/or alcohol testing.

POST-ACCIDENT:

Whenever a County employee is involved in an accident involving a fatality, serious bodily injury, or damage to property of a combined total of \$2,000.00 or more, regardless of fault, the employee will be required to submit a specimen for drug and alcohol testing. Damage amount is determined by the Department Head or the supervisor on the scene. Inhalant testing, if necessary, will be determined by the Department Head or the supervisor on the scene.

1. Post Accident Testing For Alcohol - The employee's supervisor will prepare, and the Human Resources Coordinator will maintain on file, a record stating the reasons if the test is not administered within the following time constraints:
 2. within two (2) hours, following the accident for a BAT, or
 3. within eight (8) hours of the accident for a blood test. After eight (8) hours, the County will cease attempts to administer an alcohol test.
4. Post Accident Testing for Drugs and/or Inhalants - If the test is not administered within thirty-two (32) hours, the County will cease attempts to administer the test. The employee's supervisor will prepare, and the Human Resources Coordinator will maintain on file, a record stating the reasons the test was not promptly administered.
5. Employee Responsibility - The employee driver(s) involved in the accident shall remain available for testing, or the County may consider the employee to have refused to be tested.

RANDOM TESTING:

A verifiable, scientific, random method of choosing employees for alcohol and drug testing will be utilized for County drivers required to maintain a commercial driver's license.

Random Alcohol Testing will be conducted as follows:

1. A minimum annual rate of fifty percent (50%) of the average number of driver positions.
2. Tests will be unannounced and spread reasonably throughout a calendar year.
3. Upon notification, the employee must proceed immediately to the testing site.
4. An employee will only be tested for alcohol while performing safety-sensitive functions, just before performing safety-sensitive functions or just after performing safety-sensitive functions.

Random Controlled Substance Testing will be conducted as follows:

1. A minimum annual rate of fifty percent (50%) of the average number of driver positions.
2. Tests will be unannounced and spread reasonably throughout a calendar year.
3. Upon notification, the employee must proceed immediately to the testing site.
4. Random controlled substance tests may be administered any time the employee is on duty.

DETECTION LEVELS AND TEST RESULTS

ALCOHOL

Two (2) detection levels are established for the detection of alcohol in breath or blood for the purposes of all alcohol tests required by the County.

Level 1: Between 0.02% and 0.04% weight per volume of alcohol or ethyl alcohol. If found in an employee's breath, blood or urine, employer shall require the employee to undergo counseling for alcohol abuse. If the employee successfully completes the counseling program, no disciplinary action shall be taken against him/her. If found in a job applicant's breath, blood or urine, employer shall automatically reject the job applicant.

Level 2: 0.04% and above weight per volume of alcohol or ethyl alcohol. If found in an employee's blood or on the breath, employee will have tested positive for the presence of alcohol at detectable levels and the positive test result shall be grounds for termination from employment. If found in a job applicant's blood or on the breath, employer shall automatically reject the job applicant.

DRUGS

The detectable levels for drugs for the purposes of certain drug tests required by the County are listed as follows. The detectable levels for drugs not included on the following list will be determined by the County's testing laboratory.

ASSAY	DRUG OR METABOLITE IN URINE	CONCENTRATION EMIT DETECTION LIMIT (INITIAL SCREENING	GC/MS DETECTION LIMIT IN URINE / BLOOD CONFIRMATORY TEST
Amphet amine	Methamphetamine	1000 ng / ml per ml	500 ng / ml per ml
Benzodi azepine	Oxazepam (target metabolite) Chlordiazepoxide Diazepam N-Desmethyldiazepam Flurazepam	300 ng / ml per ml	300 ng / ml per ml
Cannabi noid (Carbox y THC)	Cannabinoid metabolites found in urine after use of marijuana or hashish	30 ng / ml per ml	15 ng / ml per ml
Cocaine	Benzoylcegonine Ecgonine	Lowest Detectable Level	Lowest Detectable Level
Methad one	Methadone and metabolites	300 ng / ml per ml	300 ng / ml per ml
Opiate	Morphine Morphine glucuronide Codeine Major heroin metabolites	300 ng / ml per ml	300 ng / ml per ml
Phencyc lidine	Phencyclidine (PCP) Metabolites and Analogues	25 ng / ml per ml	25 ng / ml per ml

POST TEST PRACTICES

The County will use a positive test result for drugs and/or alcohol at detectable levels as grounds to automatically reject a job applicant or to terminate employment of an employee **ONLY AFTER IT HAS BEEN VERIFIED** by a confirmatory drug test different from the initial drug screening test or a confirmatory alcohol test.

Any regular employee who tests positive for the presence of drugs, inhalants and/or alcohol at detectable levels shall be allowed to assert, as an affirmative defense to any disciplinary action, that the employee has a valid prescription for the controlled substance from a licensed medical practitioner or that the employee has taken an over-the-counter medication in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. The controlled substance taken by prescription must be taken in the prescribed dosage by the employee and shall be prescribed only for the employee who tests positive. The burden of proving the affirmative defense shall rest on the employee.

Strict confidentiality of the drug, inhalants and/or alcohol testing process shall be maintained to protect the privacy of employees and job applicants tested. Information on test results and all forms completed by the employee or applicant shall be released within the County organization only on a need-to-know basis unless required by law or in defense of the County. An employee or job applicant may obtain his/her own test results upon written request to the Human Resources Department. Test results shall not be released to any other person not associated with the County without the written consent of the employee or the job applicant unless such release is required by law or in defense of the County.

COMPLIANCE WITH POLICY

An employee reasonably suspected of the use of illegal drugs, unauthorized inhalants, unauthorized controlled substances and/or alcohol during regular working hours (Monday - Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.) will be taken to the designated County laboratory for testing. If outside of regular working hours or on holidays or weekends, employees will be taken to the designated County laboratory for testing with a completed and signed consent form.

The Department Head at his/her discretion may have the employee taken home and paid for the time required to get test results or may assign the employee to safe, non-driving, duty pending the test results.

Applicants and employees will have the opportunity prior to testing to voluntarily list all prescription and non-prescription drugs they have used in the last thirty days and to explain the circumstances surrounding their use.

Employees who are convicted, who plead nolo contendere, or who plead guilty to violations of criminal drug and/or alcohol statutes involving activities on-the-job are considered to be in violation of this section. In addition, an employee is required to notify his/her supervisor of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace by the employee no later than five (5) days after the conviction.

Violations of this policy will be considered to be a violation of the Personnel Policy Manual.

DRUG-FREE AWARENESS PROGRAM

1. Drug-free Awareness Program will provide an ongoing educational effort to prevent and eliminate drug and alcohol abuse that may affect the workplace. This program will inform employees and their families about:
 - 1.1.1. The dangers of alcohol and drug abuse in the workplace;
 - 1.1.2. This County's Alcohol and Drug Policy;
 - 1.1.3. The availability of treatment and counseling for employees who voluntarily seek such assistance; and

- 1.1.4. The discipline which will be imposed for violations of this policy.
2. Initial and on-going supervisory training will be mandatory for supervisors covering the following areas:
3. Identifying and documenting job performance and on-the-job behavior that may reflect the impact of personal problems;
4. Identifying evidence of on-the-job use of, or impairment, or presence of alcohol, inhalants or drugs and impairment resulting from the use of alcohol, inhalants or drugs;
5. Procedure for voluntary referral of troubled employees for assessment;
6. Procedure for testing employees suspected of violating the County's Drug Free Workplace Policy;
7. Constructive confrontation techniques; and
8. Orientation on drug and alcohol testing procedures and technology.

RECORDS PROCEDURES

RELEASE OF INFORMATION

Requests for employment verification or reference for an individual terminated under this policy shall be forwarded to the Human Resources Coordinator for response. For Texas Employment Commission hearings on granting unemployment compensation, the County will cite a rules violation as the reason for termination and will supply a copy of the letter of termination which states specific reasons. Where there is doubt about the release of information, the Legal Counsel shall be consulted for guidance.

REPORTING CONVICTIONS TO FEDERAL AGENCY

In compliance with the Drug Free Workplace Act, the Human Resources Coordinator will notify the appropriate federal agency within ten (10) days after receiving notice from the employee of a conviction under criminal drug statutes. Within thirty (30) days of knowledge of conviction, disciplinary sanctions will be initiated related to the conviction.

13.00 USE OF COUNTY PROPERTY

13.01 GENERAL POLICY

The County attempts to provide each employee with equipment and vehicles adequate to perform the job assigned, and expects each employee to observe safe work practices and safe and courteous operation of vehicles and equipment in compliance with all applicable regulations.

13.02 USE OF TOOLS, EQUIPMENT, PROPERTY

Employees who are assigned tools, equipment, vehicles, or any other County property by their departments are responsible for them and for proper use and maintenance.

A Department Head may impose additional requirements for the use of County property, materials, supplies, tools or equipment. An employee in doubt about a circumstance must check with the Department Head before proceeding.

No personal or political use of any County property, materials, supplies, tools, or equipment is permitted.

13.03 USE OF COUNTY VEHICLES

County vehicles may be taken home when necessary for emergency response, on-call duties, or to secure specialized equipment. Authorized departments include the Sheriff's Office, EMS, Juvenile Probation, District Attorney and any other department approved by Commissioners Court. During severe inclement weather or emergencies, the County Judge or any Commissioner may also authorize any County employee to take County vehicles home when necessary to support emergency response or maintain county operations.

Employees are responsible for safeguarding the vehicle and its contents, parking in a reasonably secure location, and promptly reporting any theft, damage, or loss.

****** County vehicles may not be used for personal purposes.**

13.04 VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE

All operators of County vehicles or their own personal vehicle on County business are required to have a valid driver's license necessary for legal operation of that vehicle in the State of Texas and to keep the supervisors informed of any change of status in their license. Supervisors periodically will check the driving records of all employees who operate County vehicles or are required to drive personal vehicles on County business. Failure to maintain a safe driving record may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Suspension or revocation of the driver's license of an employee who operates a County vehicle, or is required to drive a personal vehicle regularly on County business, may result in a demotion or dismissal.

13.05 VEHICLE INSURANCE

The County maintains insurance coverage on all vehicles owned or leased by the County. Employees who regularly drive a personal vehicle on County business and are reimbursed expenses on a per mile basis are required to have automobile liability insurance with limits required by the State of Texas and to maintain insurance coverage. Each employee to whom this provision applies will furnish the County proof of appropriate insurance coverage at least annually and at such time(s) as coverage changes occur. Failure to meet any of these requirements may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

13.06 ACCIDENT REPORTING

Any employee operating County vehicles must report all vehicular accidents and property damage or liability claims, no matter how minor, to the Department Head and to the appropriate law enforcement authorities immediately, so that an official accident report can be filed. Drug and alcohol testing is required.

The employee's Department Head must notify the Human Resources Coordinator and the County Auditor of the accident on the day of the accident if it occurred on a business day, and on the first business day following the accident if it occurred after hours or on a non-workday.

A copy of any accident report involving County equipment or vehicles must be forwarded to the Department Head as soon as the law enforcement investigation is completed. A copy of the accident report must also be filed with the County Auditor and in the personnel file in the Human Resources Coordinator's Office of the employee involved in the accident.

13.07 USE OF BUILDINGS AND PREMISES

Use of County buildings and premises by employees shall be in compliance with law and with County policies regarding authorized uses.

14.00 USE OF COUNTY COMPUTERS

14.01 GENERAL

The County provides computers and internet connections ("facilities") to further its official County business, interests and purposes. The County has the right to monitor all communications and downloads that pass through its facilities, at its sole discretion. Any information retained on the County's facilities may be disclosed to outside parties or to law enforcement authorities.

County personnel may not load or download any games, unauthorized software or material from the internet or elsewhere. In addition, County personnel may not add any unauthorized hardware on any County computer provided. Requests for any additional software and/or hardware should be made to the official or Department Head.

14.02 INTERNET ACCESS

The County provides internet access to certain individuals, officials, Department Heads and designated personnel. This internet access is provided for County business purposes. At no time is any employee authorized to use this access for personal financial gain or pornographic sites or any other sites which could compromise the ethics of the County. Authorized users may not use the County's facilities for personal or commercial advertisements, solicitations or promotions. The use of the internet can and will be monitored and violations will be reported to the appropriate official or Department Head for disciplinary action.

Employees are individually liable for any and all damages incurred as a result of violating County security policy, copyright, and licensing agreements.

14.03 AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF E-MAIL

As determined by the official or Department Head, personnel may be authorized the use of e-mail. Such authorization allows for the non-official use of e-mail, provided such communication does not disrupt or interfere with official County business and is kept to a minimum during business hours. Authorized users may not disseminate or knowingly receive harassing, sexually explicit, threatening or illegal information by use of the County's facilities, including offensive jokes or cartoons.

The use of e-mail can and will be monitored and violations will be reported to the appropriate official or Department Head for disciplinary action.

Employees may not retrieve or read other employees e-mail unless authorized by the Department Head or by the e-mail recipient. It is a violation of County policy for any employee, including system administrators and supervisors, to access electronic mail and computer systems files to satisfy curiosity

about the affairs of others, unless such access is directly related to that employee's job duties. Employees found to have engaged in such activities will be subject to disciplinary action.

14.04 RIGHT TO PRIVACY

Ownership and Access of Electronic Mail, Internet Access, and Computer Files; No Expectation of Privacy

The County owns the rights to all data and files in any computer, network, or other information system used in the County and to all data and files sent or received using any County system or using the County's access to any computer network, to the extent that such rights are not superseded by applicable laws relating to intellectual property. The County also reserves the right to monitor electronic mail messages (including personal/private/instant messaging systems) and their content, as well as any and all use by employees of the Internet and of computer equipment used to create, view, or access e-mail and Internet content. Employees must be aware that the electronic mail messages sent and received using County equipment or County-provided Internet access, including web-based messaging systems used with such systems or access, are not private and are subject to viewing, downloading, inspection, release, and archiving by County officials at all times. The County has the right to inspect any and all files stored in private areas of the network or on individual computers or storage media in order to assure compliance with County policies and state and federal laws.

The County uses software in its electronic information systems that allows monitoring by authorized personnel and that creates and stores copies of any messages, files, or other information that is entered into, received by, sent, or viewed on such systems. Accordingly, employees should assume that whatever they do, type, enter, send, receive, and view on County electronic information systems is electronically stored and subject to inspection, monitoring, evaluation, and County use at any time. Further, employees who use County systems and Internet access to send or receive files or other data that would otherwise be subject to any kind of confidentiality or disclosure privilege thereby waive whatever right they may have to assert such confidentiality or privilege from disclosure. Employees who wish to maintain their right to confidentiality or a disclosure privilege must send or receive such information using some means other than County systems or the County-provided Internet access.

15.00 CELLULAR PHONE SERVICES

15.01 AUTHORIZATION OF CONTRACTS

The Commissioners' Court is the only body authorized to enter into cellular phone contracts on behalf of County employees or officials.

Cellular phones will be authorized if the following criteria are met:

The employee is required to be mobile and in direct contact with County Officials, their department, other employees or the general public; and/or the employee is required to maintain two (2) way communications in timely and critical situations and for which there is no reasonable alternative technology.

15.02 SERVICE OPTIONS

There are two (2) options for officials or employees authorized to purchase cellular technology services:

1. The County may purchase cellular phones for employees to make business related calls or calls as outlined under a contract with a provider; or
2. An employee may purchase a cellular phone and request reimbursement from the County for business calls.

Government rates are only applicable for calls made on County-owned cellular phones. Requests for reimbursement must be approved in advance by the Commissioners' Court.

15.03 MONITORING AND PAYMENT

The County reserves the right to monitor all phones calls made on County purchased cellular phones. Employees should be aware, cellular transmissions are not secure and use discretion in relaying confidential information. Inordinate amounts of personal use, shall be brought to the attention of the Commissioners' Court and may result in the revocation of the cell phone.

Monthly invoices for payment will be reviewed and approved for payment by the employee and the Elected Official or Department Head.

Mobile phones may not be used for personal gain; illegal, fraudulent or malicious activity; political activity; entertainment; religious promotion; or activity on behalf of organizations or individuals having no affiliation with the County.

16.00 TRAVEL EXPENSES

16.01 PURPOSE

The following policy is drafted to follow Internal Revenue Service rules that simplify record keeping and accounting and preserve a plan that allows The County to make reimbursement for travel, meals, lodging and related expenses without creating items that are subject to income tax reporting by County officials and employees.

The policy is also adopted to protect the County and the individuals that serve as County officials or employees in liability and workers' compensation insurance matters.

Most importantly, the policy is drafted to provide protection for the reputations of individuals carrying on County business and to protect the interest of the taxpayers and residents of the County in satisfaction of "the Public Interest".

16.02 GENERAL PROCEDURES AND ACCOUNTING

The County pays or reimburses the travel expenses of Elected Officials and County employees that are incurred by the individuals in their performance of official County business. The County also pays or reimburses for the cost and travel associated with meetings, conferences, and seminars associated with continuing education related to an individual's work or maintenance of professional certification or licenses.

All travel expenses are subject to requirements of documentation and reasonableness, and will be honored in conformity with adopted policies and procedures, provided that the travel was properly authorized and funds are available in the County's budget.

If a spouse and/or dependent(s) stays with the official or employee, the difference in hotel room rates above the single rate must be deducted. Meals and all other expenses for the spouse and/or dependent(s) will not be paid with County funds.

Out of state travel must be approved in advance by Commissioners' Court.

16.03 MILEAGE

Mileage shall be paid at the rate allowed by the Internal Revenue Service for the use of personal vehicles as determined by Commissioners' Court. Expenses shall be paid only when actually incurred by the employee or Elected Official/department. An employee who carools with another individual is not eligible for mileage.

Mileage between starting and final destinations is computed utilizing the official mileage guide in the Auditor's Office. Additional mileage must be explained and may be approved.

16.04 LODGING

Calhoun County will reimburse the employees for lodging expenses provided the employee submit a detailed, itemized receipt.

- **Travel days** – if the employee must leave before 7:00 am to arrive at the start of the event and or/return to the County after 6:00 pm after the event concludes, an additional nights lodging is allowable before and/or after the event.
- **Additional fees allowable** – Self-parking
- **Additional fees allowable with justification** – Valet parking is allowable if extreme hardship exist due to physical disability or if no self-parking is available
- **Fees not allowable** – Internet, phone charges, laundry, safe fees, gratuities for lodging services, travel insurance, movie rentals

16.05 MEALS

Calhoun County meal reimbursement will align with the Meals & Incidental Expenses rates for the specific training location/county, as well as the First and Last Day of travel rate, as listed on the U.S. General Services Administration website of current year. If the destination is not listed with specific rates, the standard M&IE rate and first and last day of travel will apply. These rates will be provided with current county travel report.

- **County issued credit cards may not be used for meal purchases while traveling, except for meals associated with prisoner or probationer transports as authorized by the appropriate department.**
- **Tips and gratuities are not permitted and will not be paid or reimbursed by the County.**
- **Bar charges are now allowable expenses and shall not be paid or reimbursed by the County.**

16.06 OTHER TRANSPORTATION

The County will pay or reimburse travel by air, bus or train at the lowest possible rates. The passenger's copy of the original ticket must be submitted with the "Travel Reimbursement Request". Tickets may be paid for in advance from a travel agency invoice.

Parking fees may also be reimbursed. A receipt is required for reimbursement.

Taxis, buses, and other ground transportation to and from airports are allowable expenses. Taxis may be used to go to and from hotel/motel to meeting sites and to and from places for meals. A receipt that shows starting location and ending destination is required for reimbursement.

17.00 POLICY ON AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

17.01 POLICY OVERVIEW

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires employers to reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with disabilities. It is the policy of the County to comply with all federal and state laws concerning the employment of persons with disabilities.

It is the County's policy not to discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities in regard to application procedures, hiring, advancement, discharge, compensation, training, or other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.

The County will reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with a temporary or long-term disability so that they can perform the essential functions of a job. An individual who can be reasonably accommodated for a job, without undue hardship, will be given the same consideration for that position as any other applicant.

All employees are required to comply with safety standards. Applicants who pose a direct threat to the health or safety of other individuals in the workplace, which threat cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation, will not be hired.

Current employees who pose a direct threat to the health or safety of the other individuals in the workplace will be placed on appropriate leave until an organizational decision has been made in regard to the employee's immediate employment situation.

Commissioners' Court is responsible for implementing this policy, including resolution of reasonable accommodation, safety, and undue hardship issues.

17.02 DEFINITIONS

As used in this policy, the following terms have the indicated meaning and will be adhered to in relation to the ADA policy.

1. **Disability** - Refers to a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one (1) or more of the major life activities of an individual. An individual who has such an impairment, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment is a “disabled individual”.
2. **Reasonable accommodation** - Means making existing facilities readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, job restructuring, part time or modified work schedules, reassignment to a vacant position, acquisition or modification of equipment or devices, adjustment or modification of examinations, adjustment or modification of training materials, adjustment or modification of policies, and similar activities.
3. **Undue hardship** - Means an action requiring significant difficulty or expense by the employer. The factors to be considered in determining an undue hardship include:
 - a) The nature and cost of the accommodation;
 - b) The overall financial resources of the facility at which the reasonable accommodation is to be made;
 - c) The number of persons employed at that facility;
 - d) The effect on expenses and resources or other impact upon that facility;
 - e) The overall financial resources of the County;
 - f) The overall number of employees and facilities;
 - g) The operations of the particular facility as well as the entire County; and
 - h) The relationship of the particular facility to the County. These are not all of the factors but merely examples.
4. **Essential job functions** - Refers to those activities of a job that are the core to performing said job for which the job exists that cannot be modified.

18.00 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY

18.01 POLICY OVERVIEW

The County provides a safe workplace for all employees. To ensure a safe workplace and to reduce the risk of violence, all employees should review and understand all provisions of this workplace violence policy.

18.02 PROHIBITED CONDUCT

The County does not tolerate any type of workplace violence committed by or against employees. Employees are prohibited from making threats or engaging in violent activities.

This list of behaviors, while not inclusive, provides examples of conduct that is prohibited:

1. Causing physical injury to another person; or
2. Making threatening remarks; or
3. Aggressive or hostile behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury to another person or subjects another individual to emotional distress; or
4. Intentionally damaging employer property or property of another employee; or
5. Committing acts motivated by, or related to, sexual harassment or domestic violence.

18.03 REPORTING PROCEDURES

Any potentially dangerous situations must be reported immediately to a supervisor, Human Resources or the County Judge. Reports can be made anonymously and all reported incidents will be investigated. Reports or incidents warranting confidentiality will be handled appropriately and information will be disclosed to others only on a need-to-know basis. All parties involved in a situation will be counseled and the results of investigations will be discussed with them. The County will actively intervene at any indication of a possibly hostile or violent situation.

18.04 RISK REDUCTION MEASURES

Hiring: The Department Head takes reasonable measures to conduct background investigations to review candidates' backgrounds and reduce the risk of hiring individuals with a history of violent behavior. **Safety:** The County conducts annual inspections of the premises to evaluate and determine any vulnerabilities to workplace violence or hazards. Any necessary corrective action will be taken to reduce all risks.

Individual Situations: While we do not expect employees to be skilled at identifying potentially dangerous persons, employees are expected to exercise good judgment and to inform the County Judge if any employee exhibits behavior which could be a sign of potentially dangerous situations. Such behavior includes:

1. Displaying overt signs of extreme stress, resentment, hostility, or anger; or
2. Making threatening remarks; or
3. Sudden or significant deterioration of performance; or
4. Displaying irrational or inappropriate behavior.
5. **Employees at Risk:** The Human Resources Coordinator will identify and maintain a list of employees who have been determined to be at risk for becoming victims of violence because of the nature of their job or because they are subject to harassment, violence, or threats from a non-employee.

18.05 DANGEROUS/EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Employees who confront or encounter an armed or dangerous person should not attempt to challenge or disarm the individual. Employees should remain calm, make constant eye contact and talk to the individual. If a supervisor can be safely notified of the need for assistance without endangering the safety of the employee or others, such notice should be given. Otherwise, cooperate and follow the instructions given.

18.06 ENFORCEMENT

Threats, threatening conduct, or any other acts of aggression or violence in the workplace will not be tolerated. Any employee determined to have committed such acts will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Non-employees engaged in violent acts on the employer's premises will be reported to the proper authorities and fully prosecuted.

19.00 SMOKING AND VAPING POLICY

19.01 PURPOSE

The County maintains a smoke and vape free environment. No smoking/vaping is permitted in any part of the building owned, leased, or rented by the County. Employees may smoke/vape outside in designated areas. When smoking outside, do not leave cigarette butts or other traces of litter or tobacco use on the ground or anywhere else. Dispose of any litter properly in the receptacles provided for that purpose.

20.00 EMERGENCY CLOSING

INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSINGS / EMERGENCY CLOSINGS / EVACUATIONS

Declaration of an Emergency

The County Judge shall be the local County authority to declare an emergency exists, or in the County Judge's absence, the County Judge Protem (or another County Commissioner, if necessary). In the event of an emergency closing or evacuation, the County shall provide paid leave for "essential" and "non-essential" employees in the event of certain emergencies including, but not limited to:

- Hurricanes
- Floods
- Inclement weather such as ice & snow
- Other acts of God
- Nuclear, chemical, and biological emergencies
- Terrorist attacks
- Any other emergency declared by the federal, state, or local authority.

CLOSING DUE TO AN EVACUATION ORDER

When an evacuation has been ordered, all "non-essential", non-emergency personnel will be released from work and encouraged to evacuate. Employees designated by their Department Head as "essential" Emergency Services Personnel will not be authorized to evacuate if an evacuation order is issued in accordance with Chapter 22 of the Texas Labor Code. Any "essential" employee who fails to report to work as scheduled during an emergency evacuation order may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including job termination; if the employee is necessary to provide for the safety and well-being of the general public or is otherwise necessary for the restoration of vital services. All "essential" employees must be designated and made aware of their assignment prior to an emergency. A list of "essential" employees shall be provided to the Emergency Management Coordinator and the Human Resources Coordinator and shall be updated annually or as needed. Shifts may be established

according to departmental needs at the discretion of the Department Head. Employees who are assigned “on call” status must notify supervisors of locations where they can be contacted.

COMPENSATION OF EMPLOYEES DUE TO AN EVACUATION ORDER

ESSENTIAL

Where there is an emergency closure of County offices, all “essential” employees who are required to work during the emergency closure will be compensated as indicated below for the duration of the closure for all documented time during which they actually worked. (Exempt employees’ salaries will be converted to an hourly equivalent.) The term “actually worked” means time actively engaged in physical or mental exertion related to the County’s business (at the direction and control of the Department Head or Commissioners’ Court) either on the County’s premises or actively engaged in the same manner in the County’s business off premises at the direction and control of the Department Head or Commissioners’ Court. The term “actually worked” shall include stand-by and stand-by/sleep time as recognized under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) only in those instances where the employee is required by the Department Head (or Commissioners’ Court if the employee is an appointed Department Head) to stay on County premises engaged to wait on instructions to work, and the employee does, in fact, stand by and/or sleep on the County premises. **Following are examples for each FLSA classification:**

- a. Elected Officials, the County Auditor, Court Reporters and Assistant Criminal District Attorneys are regulated by State Statutes or other law; therefore, they are not subject to overtime compensation during an emergency closure.
- b. Exempt – A chief deputy in the Sheriff’s Office who is designated as an “essential” employee during an emergency closure would receive his/her regular salary plus straight-time pay for all hours actually worked during the emergency closure. Their hourly rate would be derived from their regular salary.
- c. Nonexempt – A Road and Bridge equipment operator normally working a 10-hour shift who is designated as an “essential” employee during an emergency closure would receive 10 hours of regular pay for each normally scheduled workday plus straight-time pay for all hours actually worked during the emergency closure unless and until the total hours actually worked during the work week exceeded 40 hours. At that time, the employee would receive overtime pay for those hours worked in excess of 40.
- d. Sheriff’s deputies who are designated as “essential” employees during an emergency closure would receive their regular pay, based on a 28-consecutive day work period with a maximum of 171 hours straight-time before overtime accrues to them. They then would receive additional straight-time pay for all hours actually worked during the emergency closure unless and until the total hours actually worked during the period exceeded 171 hours. At that time, the employees would receive overtime for those hours worked in excess of 171.
- e. The maximum number of work hours which may be recorded for any single work day is 24 hours for the first
- f. t 72 hours of the emergency closure and 18 hours per day thereafter.

NON-ESSENTIAL:

- a. Full-time, regular employees who are not required to report for duty will be paid for the Mandatory Emergency Days and Inclement Weather days as Administrative leave for the purpose of calculating their compensation. Early closures relative to inclement weather at the direction of the County Judge will be compensated as paid Administrative Leave.
- b. Part-time and temporary employees will be paid for their scheduled time lost due to an emergency closing.

c. In the event of this type of closing, employees who had previously requested paid leave for time off prior to the declaration of an emergency closing will have the approved leave time deducted from their appropriate leave balance.

RETURN-TO-DUTY PHASE:

All “non-essential” employees will report to their usual work areas as soon as possible following the order for resumption of normal operations, after the lifting of the emergency closure order and/or instructions from the applicable Elected Official/appointed Department Head. By reporting to work as directed, each employee meets their responsibility to work with other County employees as a team in restoring the community to normal service levels following disaster. Non-essential service employees who evacuated will report to work at the start of the next normal shift, or sooner as directed, following the announcement of the Return-To-Duty-Phase. When all County offices are closed, an announcement will usually be posted on the Calhoun County website in addition to return-to-duty instructions. Any employee who is off work or scheduled to be off on sick leave, sick pool, vacation, emergency leave, workers’ compensation, FMLA, or disciplinary leave shall have their leave recorded as such.

Violation of this Policy

An employee who violates this policy by:

- a) Refusing to perform assigned duties required by this Policy or to obey any order or directive made or given by a supervisor; or
- b) Failing to report for duty as directed during any applicable phase of this Policy; or
- c) Failure to abide by County Policy, departmental rules of regulations; or
- d) Any conduct that interferes with, or might reasonably be expected to interfere with the proper and orderly conduct the County’s businesses or that brings, or might reasonably be expected to bring, discredit of the public service.

Consequences for Violation of the Policy. A violation of this Policy shall be considered a violation of County Policy, departmental rules, or regulations for which disciplinary action up to and including dismissal may be taken by the applicable Department Head, with the concurrence of the Elected Official.

The County reserves the right to amend, change, or delete this policy at any time, with or without prior notice. Furthermore, this policy does not grant a right or benefit to any employee, either expressed or implied, that in way alters the “at will” basis of employment that is intended by the County.

Severe Weather Conditions

When a county wide closing is not initiated, Elected and Appointed Officials retain the authority to make a determination for their own employees when weather conditions are so severe that it is unsafe for employees to travel from their residences to their assigned work stations. Elected and Appointed Officials are those Department Heads that have taken the oath and statement in accordance with Article XVI, §1 of the Texas Constitution.