



Walker County

Personnel Policy Manual

**Adopted by Commissioners' Court
Order No. 2015-23
June 1, 2015**

Walker County Personnel Policy Manual

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ORDER NO. 2015-23

WHEREAS, the members of Walker County Commissioner's Court desire to have a clear and understandable personnel policy manual for the employees; and

WHEREAS, the policy manual will help Walker County comply with current employment laws, comply with IRS regulations on reporting of taxable benefits, identify uniform procedures for the hiring of employees and termination process for persons retiring or otherwise leaving employment, and encourage consistency of the application of these policies between departments; and

WHEREAS, the personnel manual will allow for the implementation of a more effective county government which will benefit the citizens of Walker County through more efficient standards; and

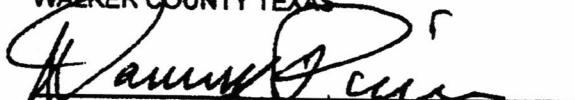
WHEREAS, this policy replaces the WALKER COUNTY PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL adopted the 10th day of May 2010 and subsequently amended on numerous occasions; and

WHEREAS, all previous personnel policy manuals, implied policies, informal policies, verbal policies, and written contracts whether known or unknown, are hereby rescinded and declared null and void;

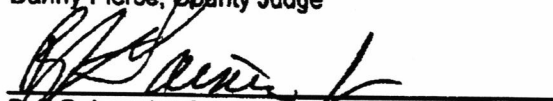
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that on this 26th day of May 2015 the Walker County Commissioners' Court does hereby adopt, accept, and place into effect this manual called the WALKER COUNTY PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL and it shall be in effect from June 1, 2015, forward until rescinded by official order of the Walker County Commissioners' Court.

PASSED AND APPROVED this 26th day of May 2015.


WALKER COUNTY TEXAS



Danny Pierce, County Judge



B. J. Gaines Jr., Commissioner Precinct 1



Ronnie White, Commissioner Precinct 2

Bobby Warren, Commissioner Precinct 3



Jimmy D. Henry, Commissioner Precinct 4

ATTEST



Kari French, County Clerk

Walker County Personnel Policy Manual

Introduction

Personnel policies in smaller local government jurisdictions frequently evolve through tradition and custom. As government grows and becomes more complex, even the very small jurisdiction finds that it must have clearly stated personnel policies for effective operation.

The personnel policies for Walker County have been developed to provide a better understanding of the relationship between the County and the citizens who serve the County as employees. This is done by:

1. Stating the rules and regulations that apply to County Employees;
2. Outlining the expectations the County has of its employees;
3. Providing information and systems to increase the efficiency of the personnel management program of the County.

Each of these policies and parts of policies are intended to stand independently. Therefore, if any policy or part of a policy becomes invalid because of federal or state law or other authority, it shall not affect the validity or application of other policies or parts of policies.

From time to time, it may be necessary to make changes in these policies as a result of changes in laws, regulations, the County or its programs. When this occurs, the County may provide notification to employees through a variety of methods.

The purpose of these policies is to serve the needs of both the employees and the County to the mutual benefit of both. Any employee who has a question concerning any of Walker County's personnel policies is encouraged to discuss it with his or her supervisor.

Walker County Personnel Policy Manual

STATEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT "AT WILL"

Employment with Walker County is considered "at will". That is, either the employer or employee can sever the employment relationship at any time without notice, for any legal reason, or for no reason at all. Employment "at will" has been Walker County's employment policy in the past and Walker County will continue the "at will" policy until changed by official order of the Walker County Commissioners' Court. Employment "at will" supersedes all other policies contained in the Walker County Personnel Policy Manual. Walker County shall also have the right to change any condition, benefit, policy or privilege of employment at any time, with or without notice. No provision of this personnel policy manual shall be construed as modifying the employment "at will" status.

I _____, an employee of Walker County, hereby disclose that I have read the above statement and understand that I have been employed "at will" by Walker County and that my signature below affirms that understanding. My signature also confirms that I have been provided a copy of the personnel policy manual.

DATE

EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE

DATE

OFFICIAL/SUPERVISOR

Walker County Personnel Policy Manual

DISCLAIMER

Walker County desires to maintain consistent compliance with all applicable State and Federal employment laws and regulations. Consistent with this intent, the County has had this Handbook reviewed by the Texas Association of Counties and the Walker County District Attorney's Office for legal compliance as of the date of publication. The County recognizes that the applicable laws and regulations frequently change, and the County will endeavor to update this handbook as appropriate. If you become aware of any policy in this handbook that has become out of date, or is no longer in compliance with current law, please immediately bring the issue to the attention of the County Judge's Office, or the Human Resources Office.

Employee Receipt & Acknowledgment

This is to acknowledge receipt of a copy of the Walker County Personnel Policy manual, and I understand that is my responsibility to read and ask questions about its contents if necessary. I understand that the handbook is not a contract with me and may be changed at any time without notice to me. I will abide by the policies and procedures of the County and of my department to the best of my ability. I also understand that Walker County is an "at will" employer and that I may terminate my employment at any time for any reason and that Walker County may terminate my employment at any time for any legal reason or no reason. I also understand that my status as an at-will employee cannot be modified except by official written order of the Walker County Commissioners' Court.

If eligible, I understand that I may be granted compensatory time off in lieu of payment of overtime to the extent provided by law and I may be required to take earned compensatory time off at the County's discretion.

I understand that I may be subject to reasonable suspicion or post-accident drug and alcohol testing. If I am required to have a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) for my county position, I will be subject to random, reasonable suspicion and post-accident drug and alcohol testing in accordance with state and federal regulations.

I acknowledge that this Manual includes ***Walker County's Drug and Alcohol Policy (2.14)***.

I acknowledge that I received the ***Network and Electronic Communications Policy (NECP) (9.01)*** of Walker County.

I also acknowledge that the provisions of the Policy are part of the terms and conditions of my employment and that I agree to abide by them.

Printed Employee Name: _____ Employee #: _____
(First, MI and Last Name)

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Dept. Head Signature: _____ Date: _____
(or I Human Resources Office)

Public Information Access Election

Pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 552.024, I elect to ***exclude my home address, home telephone number, social security number and information revealing whether I have family members*** from records in which public access is allowed under the Texas Public Information Act.

I understand that I may close or open access to this information at any time during my employment by requesting in writing to Human Resources.

Printed Employee Name: _____
(First, MI and Last Name)

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

1.01 POLICY ON APPLICABILITY

APPLICATION OF POLICIES

1. The personnel policies shall apply consistently and uniformly to all county employees.

VIOLATION OF POLICIES

2. Any employee who knowingly and intentionally violates any personnel policy of Walker County shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

KNOWLEDGE OF POLICIES

3. Once having signed the statement stating they have received the policy, then that employee does not have a defense of ignorance of the personnel policy rules. The employee is charged with reading the manual and asking questions of their supervisor for anything they do not understand.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/24/93 Amended 5/10/10 Amended 6/1/15

1.02 POLICY ON IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF PERSONNEL POLICIES

IMPLEMENTATION

Each elected/appointed official of Walker County shall be responsible for the administration and implementation of these personnel policies in all departments for which he/she has administrative, managerial, or supervisory responsibility.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/24/93 Amended 6/1/15

1.03 POLICY ON DISSEMINATION OF PERSONNEL POLICIES

MASTER PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL

1. A Master Personnel Policy Manual, which contains the original of all personnel policies in effect for Walker County, shall be available in the County Judge's Office and Human Resources.
2. Copies of the complete Personnel Policy Manual shall be maintained in each County department.

PERSONNEL POLICY COORDINATOR

3. Human Resources shall serve as the County's Personnel Policy Coordinator.
4. The duties of the Personnel Policy Coordinator shall include:
 - a. Maintaining the Master Personnel Policy Manual and updating the manual whenever Commissioners' Court approves a change, addition or deletion to the County's personnel policies;
 - b. Providing each elected official/department head with copies of new or changed policies and information when policies are deleted so that the elected official/department head will be able to update the department's copy of the Personnel Policy Manual when a change, addition, or deletion is made;
 - c. Coordinating recommendations for additions, deletions, and changes in personnel policies;
 - d. Developing and implementing a system for notifying all employees whenever a change, addition, or deletion is made in the County's personnel policies; and
 - e. Conducting an annual review of all personnel policies to determine if they are consistent with actual practices and in compliance with all legislation relating to the personnel function and the relationship between the employer and employee.

DISSEMINATION

5. At hire, each employee shall receive a copy of the Personnel Policy Manual and be provided an overview of the manual with an opportunity to ask questions. A Personnel Policy Manual shall be available on the County website and in Human Resources.

REQUIREMENT TO SIGN STATEMENT

6. Each employee shall be required to sign a statement stating that they have received the Personnel Policy Manual and is responsible for reviewing the manual.

ACCESS TO POLICY MANUALS

7. All employees shall have the right to review the Personnel Policy Manual in Human Resources or the copy of the Personnel Policy Manual found in their department at any time during the normal workday.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/24/93 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 6/1/15

1.04 POLICY ON EMPLOYMENT AT WILL

EMPLOYMENT AT WILL

Employment with Walker County is considered "at will". That is, either the employer or employee can sever the employment relationship at any time without notice, for any legal reason, or for no reason at all. Employment "at will" has been Walker County's employment policy in the past and Walker County will continue the "at will" policy until changed by official order of the Walker County Commissioners' Court. Employment "at will" supersedes all other policies contained in the Walker County Personnel Policy Manual. Walker County shall also have the right to change any condition, benefit, policy or privilege of employment at any time, with or without notice. No provision of this personnel manual shall be construed as modifying the employment "at will" status.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 6/1/15

2.01 POLICY ON EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

1. Walker County is committed to providing equal employment opportunity to all applicants and employees in all its employment practices and to providing a work environment free of discrimination and/or harassment on the basis of race, color, age, religion, national origin, sex, genetic information, pregnancy, disability, veteran or Vietnam area veteran status, the filing of a workers' compensation claim in good faith, political affiliation, or any other category protected by law. This policy applies to all aspects of employment including, but not limited to, recruitment, selection, hiring, training, promotions, transfers, discipline/counseling, pay rates, benefit plans, termination of employments, and all other forms of compensation and benefits except where required by federal and state law or where a bona fide occupational qualification exists. Walker County is also committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and as amended and will provide reasonable accommodation to applicants and employees when such reasonable accommodations do not impose an undue hardship on Walker County and can be provided without posing a substantial or imminent safety risk.

2. An employee who is found, after appropriate investigation, to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/24/93 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 6/1/15

2.01a POLICY ON AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT AMENDMENTS ACT

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT AMENDMENTS ACT (ADAAA)

1. It is the policy of Walker County to prohibit any harassment of, or discriminatory treatment of employees on the basis of a disability or because an employee has requested a reasonable accommodation. If an employee feels he or she has been subject to such treatment, or has witnessed such treatment, the situation should be reported to the employee's elected official, department head or Human Resources. All elected officials, department heads and employees with responsibilities requiring knowledge are instructed to treat the employee's disability with confidentiality.
2. It is Walker County's policy to reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with disabilities unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the county and can be provided without posing a substantial or imminent safety risk. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended (ADAAA), reasonable accommodations may be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities when such accommodations are necessary to enable them to perform the essential functions of their jobs, or to enjoy the equal benefits and privileges of employment. This policy applies to all applicants for employment and all employees.
3. If an individual requires an accommodation, they should contact their elected official, department head or Human Resources for assistance. Reasonable accommodation shall be determined through an interactive process of consultation. If a satisfactory agreement cannot be reached, the individual should contact the County Judge's Office to engage in a further dialogue regarding their need for an accommodation.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 6/1/15

2.02 POLICY ON EMPLOYEE STATUS

Each county position has an employee status that identifies how the position is paid and benefits granted by Commissioners' Court. This policy defines group health insurance and other benefit eligibility. The status of a position cannot be changed without the approval of Commissioners' Court. Regular employees working an average of thirty (30) hours or more per week shall be eligible for county group health insurance (see Policy 3.01, Group Health and Life Insurance). All positions must be included in the County's initial and/or standard measurement period for the Affordable Care Act to determine health insurance eligibility. All regular full-time, part-time and variable hour employees are required to participate in the Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS)

FULL-TIME

1. An employee who has a normal work schedule of forty (40) hours per week shall be classified as a full-time employee. All regular full-time employees are required to participate in the County group health insurance and are required to participate in the TCDRS. Full-time, non-exempt employees are required to fill out a time sheet.

PART-TIME

2. An employee who has a normal work schedule of less than thirty (30) hours per week shall be classified as a part-time employee. All regular part-time employees working an average of 30 hours per week or more shall be eligible to participate in the County group health insurance and are required to participate in the TCDRS. Part-time employees are not eligible to accrue holiday time, vacation and sick leave, or emergency leave (see Policies 3.06, 3.07, 3.08, and 3.13). Part-time, non-exempt employees are required to fill out a time sheet.

VARIABLE HOUR

3. A variable hour employee shall be any employee for whom the County cannot determine the average amount of hours that the employee will work each week. The hours are variable or indeterminate at the time of the employee's start date. If a regular variable hour employee works an average of thirty (30) or more hours a week in the measurement period, the employee will be eligible for county group health insurance under the Affordable Care Act. If an employee's schedule becomes regular, then the employee shall be reclassified as full-time or part-time depending on the hours worked. Regular variable hour employees must also participate in the TCDRS. Variable hour employees are required to fill out a time sheet.

TEMPORARY

4. An employee in a position that is established for a specific period of time or until a specific project is complete shall be considered a temporary employee. Commissioners' Court must approve a temporary position (See Policy 10.01, Personnel Management Procedures).

5. Temporary, non-exempt employees are required to fill out a time sheet.

a. Temporary Seasonal:

A seasonal employee shall be any employee who is hired into a position that lasts six (6) or less months and begins at approximately the same time each year. Examples may include, but are not limited to summer mowers and election workers. The County shall define and document the season that the employee is being hired for. Seasonal employees can be either full-time or part-time. They do not qualify for county group health insurance under the Affordable Care Act and are not eligible to participate in the TCDRS.

b. Temporary Part Time:

A temporary short term part-time employee shall be any employee who is expected to work less than thirty (30) hours each week in a position that is estimated to last for a specific period of time or until a specific project is completed, but no longer than 12 months. If the project goes beyond 12 months, the employee will be moved into a regular part-time status. Temporary short term part-time employees do not qualify for county group health insurance under the Affordable Care Act and are not eligible to participate in the TCDRS.

Walker County Personnel Policy Manual

2.02

6. See procedures for hiring Temporary employees in Policy 10.01, Personnel Management Procedures.

REGULAR

7. An employee who is not considered to be a temporary employee as defined in this policy shall be considered to be a regular employee.

8. Regular employees may either be full-time or part-time and are required to fill out a time sheet.

EXEMPT/NONEXEMPT

9. Employees shall be classified as exempt or nonexempt in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) for the purposes of computing minimum wage and over-time compensation, and all other matters governed by the FLSA. A list of exempt employees approved by Commissioners' Court shall be maintained in the County Judge's Office and Human Resources.

10. Elected Officials are considered exempt employees and are exempt from accruing vacation time, sick leave, emergency leave, holiday leave, and compensatory time. Elected officials are not required to fill out a time sheet.

11. Officials appointed by statute and department heads that meet the definition of exempt as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) are considered exempt employees. These exempt employees shall accrue vacation, sick, and emergency leave and are required to fill out time sheets to record vacation, sick, and emergency time used (in full day increments only).

12. Additional time documentation may be required by other regulations for exempt employees.

EMS MEDICAL DIRECTOR

13. EMS Medical Director is a salaried employee who works on an on-call basis. The EMS Medical Director does not accrue leave of any kind and is not required to turn in a time-sheet. The EMS Medical Director is required to participate in paid county group health insurance and the TCDRS. The EMS Medical Director may participate in any other regular full-time employee benefits and is responsible for paying all premiums or deductions.

EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT

14. No employee shall have an employment contract for a specific or indefinite period of time unless the contract is approved in writing by the Commissioners' Court.

BENEFITS

15. Employees and elected officials shall be eligible for benefits in accordance with the eligibility requirements stated with each policy describing a benefit.

16. Temporary employees shall not be eligible for any benefits except those required by law.

SHIFT WORKERS

17. Positions in a department required to be staffed seven days a week/24 hours a day. Shift workers can be full-time or part time employees.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/24/93 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 5/10/10 Amended 6/1/15

2.03 POLICY ON NEPOTISM

HIRING OF RELATIVE

1. An elected or appointed official or their appointees, of Walker County shall not hire a person related within third degree of consanguinity (blood) or the second degree of affinity (related by marriage) to work in a department which he/she supervises. (See attached chart.) An employee may not be hired that will be supervised by a relative. Supervision may not be transferred to avoid this policy.

CONTRACT EMPLOYEES

2. A relative of an elected or appointed official of Walker County shall not be hired on contract basis unless the following criteria are met and the Commissioners' Court gives approval:

- a. All reasonable efforts were made to get contract bids from other qualified individuals in the area;
- b. The cost/quantity ratio of work expected from the individual is the most favorable of all bidders; and
- c. The relationship created by the contract is not detrimental to the interests of the County and is, in fact, determined to be in the best interest of Walker County by the Commissioners' Court.

ELECTION WORKERS

3. An employee that works *only* during elections is exempt from this policy.

ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS

4. If an official is elected or appointed into office with a employee related within the third degree of consanguinity (blood) or the second degree of affinity (related by marriage) already working in the department, the County will follow the provisions of state law regarding continued employment.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/24/93 Amended 1/30/06 Amended 11/20/06 Amended 6/1/15

2.03 NEPOTISM CHARTS

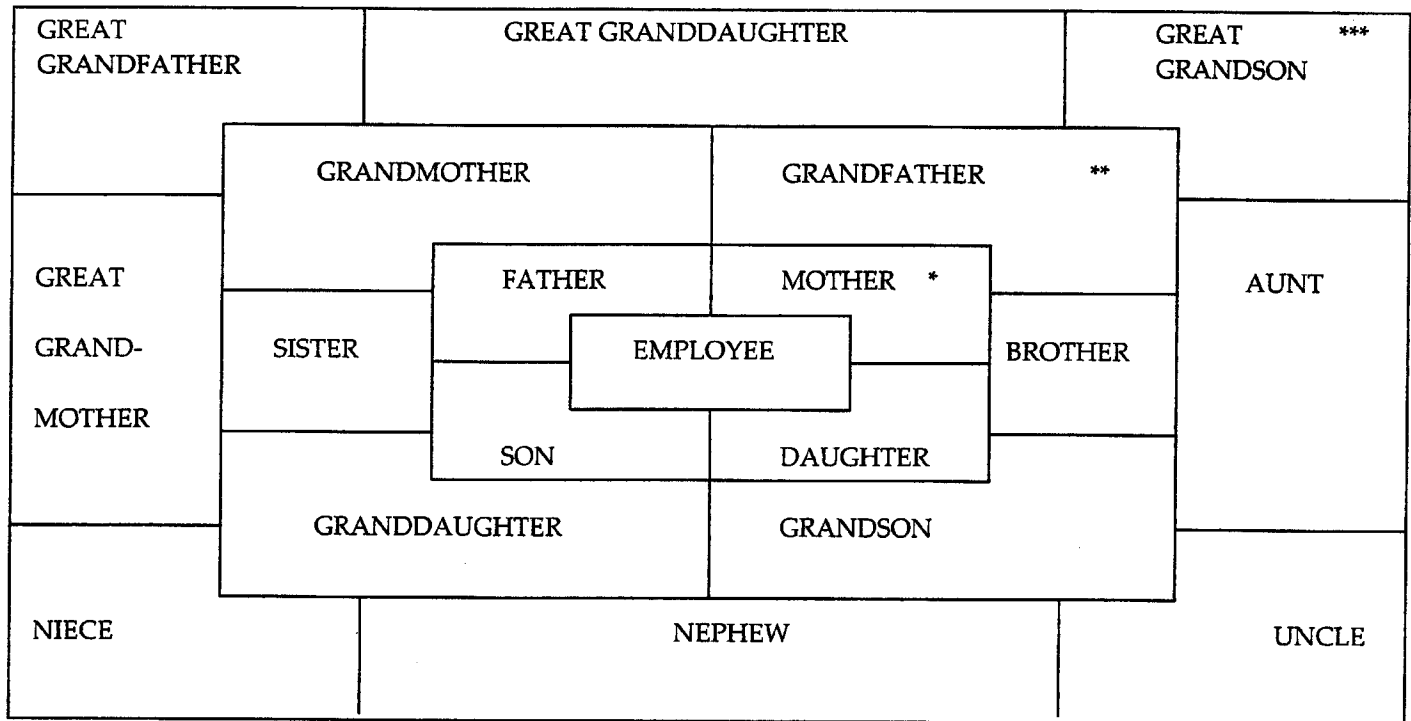


FIGURE 1 – CONSANGUINITY KINSHIP CHART

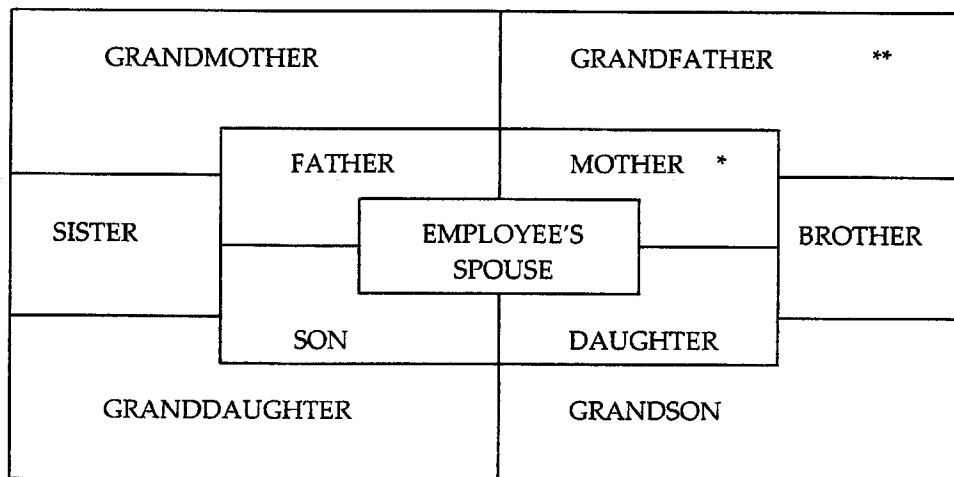


FIGURE 2 – AFFINITY KINSHIP CHART

*First Degree

**Second Degree

***Third Degree

*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.

2.04 POLICY ON PHYSICAL STANDARDS

BASIC STANDARDS

1. All current employees and applicants for whom a position has been offered should be required to meet the basic physical requirements for the position in which employee is currently working or has been offered.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

2. Following a conditional offer of employment by Walker County, each successful applicant shall be required to take a physical examination (including passing a drug test) to determine if he/she meets the basic physical requirement for the job. Pre-employment physical examinations and drug tests shall be at the expense of Walker County.

3. The purpose of any physical examination conducted under the provisions of this policy, and the nature of any reports generated by such a physical examination, shall be to measure and show only physical standards and abilities that are specifically required for the job.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

4. Determination of reasonable accommodation for otherwise qualified disabled employees or applicants shall be made in accordance with the provisions of the Policy 2.01a, Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act.

GENETIC INFORMATION NONDISCRIMINATION ACT - GINA

5. Genetic information regarding employees and applicants may not be requested, required, purchased or disclosed. This includes genetic information and test results about an individual, family, family medical history, genetic services by an individual or family member or genetic information about a fetus or embryo of an individual or family member.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/24/93 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 6/1/15

2.05 POLICY ON RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

RECRUITMENT

1. Recruitment of qualified applicants to fill positions shall include, but not be limited to, public posting in the Walker County Courthouse and on the Walker County website for a minimum of three (3) working days. Special circumstances may periodically require positions to be filled without utilizing the posting process described above, within the discretion of the applicable elected official or department head. Elected official or department head may request a job be posted on recruitment websites at their discretion.

APPLICATION

2. Employees and outside applicants may be required to complete a Walker County application before being considered for a position in the County.

3. Employees may be given first consideration to fill current openings in the form of lateral transfers. First consideration does not mean to guarantee a job transfer. It includes first notification and first consideration only.

4. Application for any open position may be submitted to Human Resources or at the office of the elected official or department head with the opening.

DISQUALIFICATION

5. An applicant shall be disqualified from consideration if he/she:

- a. Does not meet the minimum qualifications of the position for which applying;
- b. Has knowingly made a false statement on the application form or any other documents related to or which have bearing on the selection process;
- c. Has committed or attempted to commit a fraudulent act at any stage of the selection process; or
- d. Is not legally permitted to hold the position.

6. Applicant may be disqualified from consideration for employment for other reasonable grounds relating to job requirements.

SELECTION

7. Selection shall be made by the elected official, department head or supervisor with the opening.

8. Steps in determining an applicant's overall suitability for a position shall include but not be limited to:

- a. A review of the application to determine minimum qualifications;
- b. A personal interview;
- c. Reference and other background checks; and
- d. Passing a pre-employment physical.

RETENTION OF APPLICATIONS

9. When a vacancy is filled, the application of the individual selected shall be sent to the Human Resources to be placed in their personnel file. Records shall be maintained in accordance with federal, state and local laws and guidelines.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/24/93 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 6/1/15 Amended 09/13/2021

2.06 POLICY ON ORIENTATION PERIOD

NEW EMPLOYEES

1. Each new employee shall complete an orientation period of 90 days from the date of employment, reemployment or promotion. This is a time for the supervisor to evaluate the suitability of the employment relationship. During the orientation period, the supervisor may actively engage in training and frequent informal evaluation of the employee.

"AT WILL" SEPARATION

2. During the orientation period, if the elected official or department head decides, at any time, for any legal reason or no reason, that the employee is not suited for the job or that the employee's continued employment may not be in the best interest of the County, the elected official or department head may initiate an "at will" termination.

3. During the orientation period, if the new employee, for any reason, feels that his/her employment with the County may not be in his/her best interest; the employee may initiate a resignation.

RIGHT OF APPEAL

4. A new employee who receives an "at will" separation under the provisions of this policy shall have no right to appeal the separation except on the grounds of discrimination or retaliation as prohibited by law.

5. In cases of appeal on the basis of alleged unlawful discrimination or retaliation, the employee must submit his/her appeal to the Commissioners' Court through the County Judge in accordance with Policy 7.01, Grievances and Grievance Procedures.

6. The Commissioners' Court will review the facts of the situation and make a recommendation to the elected official/department head involved if the Court feels that further action or consideration is necessary.

COMPLETION OF ORIENTATION PERIOD

7. When an employee completes their 90 day orientation based on satisfactory performance, the employee shall be removed from orientation status. The orientation period may be extended for 90 days. Employees ending the 90 day orientation period without review shall be considered to have completed their orientation status. If the employee does not successfully complete their orientation period, an at will termination may occur unless an extension is granted. Due to licensing requirements, some positions may require a longer extension period.

PROMOTED EMPLOYEE

8. All promotions and transfers are conditional pending successful completion of their orientation period. During this period, employee benefits will remain the same.

9. If a promoted or transferred employee cannot meet the required standards of the new position, the employee may be terminated or may be restored to the position from which he/she was promoted or transferred or to a comparable position.

DEMOTED EMPLOYEE

10. Demoted employees shall be subject to an orientation period in their new position.

11. If a demoted employee is not able to meet the required standards for the job during the orientation period, the employee shall be dismissed.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/24/93 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 6/1/15

2.07 POLICY ON PROMOTIONS

PROMOTIONS

1. The policy of Walker County is to provide promotional opportunities for current employees whenever reasonably possible.
2. Employees wishing to apply for a promotion into an available position shall make application for that position in accordance with the provisions of Policy 2.05, Recruitment and Selection.
3. While the County's policy is to fill each position with the best qualified applicant, preference may be given to current county employees where all other qualifications are equal.

ORIENTATION PERIOD

4. County employees who are promoted shall be subject to the applicable provisions of Policy 2.06, Orientation Period.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/24/93 Amended 6/1/15

2.08 POLICY ON EMPLOYEE ATTENDANCE AND TIMELINESS

ATTENDANCE

1. An employee shall report for work on each day he/she is scheduled to work unless prior approval is given by the employee's supervisor or the employee is unable to report for work due to circumstances beyond the control of the employee.

TARDINESS

2. An employee shall be at his/her place of work in accordance with the starting time established for his/her position unless prior approval is given by the supervisor or the employee is unable to be at work on time for reasons beyond the control of the employee.

3. An employee shall remain on the job until the normal quitting time for his/her job unless permission to leave early is given by the employee's supervisor.

NOTIFICATION

4. If an employee is tardy or absent without prior approval, the employee shall be responsible for notifying his/her supervisor as soon as is practical as to the circumstances causing the tardiness or absence.

JOB ABANDONMENT AND ABSENCE CONTROL POLICY

5. Any employee absent for three consecutive workdays without notifying his/her supervisor will be considered to have voluntarily quit by abandonment and be removed from the payroll. This is an administrative procedure and will not be reported as a disciplinary action.

EXCUSED OR UNEXCUSED

6. In deciding whether a tardiness or absence without approval is to be classified as approved or unapproved, the supervisor shall be responsible for determining if the employee was tardy or absent due to circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the employee.

EXCESSIVE ABSENCE OR TARDINESS

7. Frequent unexcused absences or tardiness may subject an employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/24/93 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 5/10/2010 Amended 6/1/15

2.09 POLICY ON OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT AND ACTIVITIES

OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

1. An employee shall not engage in any activity or other employment which will adversely affect his/her ability to effectively carry out his/her job. Employees shall not use Walker County facilities or equipment or their association with Walker County to carry out a private business or profession.

Authorized outside law enforcement employment using a county vehicle or equipment must comply with department policy and be approved. If the employment is outside Walker County and the department is not headed by an elected official, the outside employment must be approved by Commissioner's Court.

2. Prior to accepting outside employment that may be a conflict of interest or interferes with the employee's assigned duties with Walker County, an employee must have prior approval from his/her elected official or department head before beginning work or employment.

3. A violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/24/93 Amended 6/1/15

2.10 POLICY ON RESPONSIBILITY FOR COUNTY PROPERTY

ASSIGNED PROPERTY

1. Employees shall be responsible for the proper use and maintenance of all tools, equipment or vehicles in their care, custody or control and will be required to sign a form accepting responsibility for county assigned equipment that is removed from the workplace. Each elected official or department head will determine what items will be listed on the form. In general, items listed would be items in the possession of the employee that are expected to be returned when the employee leaves. Items such as keys, phones, pagers, laptops, radios, identifications badges, uniforms and other specialty equipment will be listed. The employee shall be responsible to return this property to the County upon separation from employment for any reason.

DRIVER'S LICENSE/INSURABILITY

2. Employees who operate county vehicles or equipment shall have a valid State of Texas driver's license necessary for that vehicle or equipment and be insurable. A copy of the employee's current driver's license and personal insurance card must be submitted annually with timesheets and shall be maintained in Human Resources.

3. An employee who is required to have a driver's license to operate county vehicles or equipment shall immediately notify his/her supervisor of any change in the status of that license. An employee whose job involves operation of a vehicle or equipment requiring a license for legal operation shall be subject to possible job change, demotion or termination if their license is suspended or revoked.

4. An employee whose job involves operation of a vehicle or equipment requiring a license for its operation but who is deemed uninsurable by the County's vehicle liability carrier even though the employee's license has not been suspended or revoked, shall be subject to possible job change, demotion or termination.

PERSONAL USE

5. Personal use of any county property, materials, supplies, tools, equipment, or vehicles shall not be permitted and may result in discipline up to and including termination. Improper use of county property may also result in an employee's criminal prosecution.

DEPARTMENT POLICIES

(See Department Policy Manuals for additional property requirements.)

ACCIDENT REPORTING

6. Any employee operating county equipment or vehicles shall report all accidents and property damage to his/her supervisor and to the proper law enforcement or other authority immediately. The elected official, department head or supervisor or his/her designee shall report all accidents and property damage to the Purchasing Agent within 24 hours or the next business day.

7. A copy of all accident and incident reports completed by any employee of the County shall be sent to the supervisor of the employee involved and to the County Judge.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

8. Employees shall report work related injuries and illness in accordance with Policy 3.04, Workers' Compensation.

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BUILDING/VEHICLE USE

9. County property is only used for authorized work and activities and that animals shall not be brought to worksites or transported in county vehicles unless they are for work related activities such as law enforcement or a qualified service animal in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/24/93 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 6/1/15

2.11 POLICY ON TELEPHONE USE

COUNTY TELEPHONES

1. County telephones shall be used for conducting Walker County business.

PERSONAL USE

2. Personal use of county telephones by employees shall be limited to situations where it is necessary for the employee to make a personal call.
3. Excessive personal use of county telephones may make an employee subject to disciplinary measures.

LONG DISTANCE

4. Long distance calls on county phones shall be made only by employees authorized to make long distance calls and **ONLY** for official county business. All long distance calls shall be on the long distance service under contract with the County.

5. Violation of this Policy may subject an employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

CELL PHONES AND OTHER PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES

6. Use of cell phones and other communication devices (whether for verbal, text, email or other forms of communications) for non-work related purposes is discouraged during normal business hours.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/24/93 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 6/1/15

2.12 POLICY ON CONFLICT OF INTEREST

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

1. An employee shall not engage in any employment, relationship, or activity which could be viewed as a conflict of interest because of the potential or appearance of affecting his/her job efficiency or which would reduce his/her ability to make objective decisions in regard to his/her work and responsibility as an employee. Employees involved in conflict of interest situations shall be subject to discipline up to and including termination and these actions may have criminal consequences for employees.

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

2. Activities which constitute a conflict of interest under this policy shall include but not be limited to:

- a. Soliciting, accepting or agreeing to accept a financial benefit, gift, or favor, other than from the County, that might reasonably tend to influence the employee's performance of duties for the County or that the employee knows or should know is offered with intent to influence the employee's performance;
- b. Accepting employment, compensation, gifts or favors that might reasonably tend to induce the employee to disclose confidential information acquired in the performance of official duties;
- c. Accepting outside employment, compensation, gifts, or favors that might reasonably tend to impair independence of judgment in performance of duties for the County;
- d. Making any personal investment that might reasonably be expected to create a substantial conflict between the employee's private interest and duties for the County; or
- e. Soliciting, accepting, or agreeing to accept a financial benefit from another person in exchange for having performed duties as a County employee in favor of that person.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/24/93 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 6/1/15

2.13 POLICY ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY

POLITICAL ACTIVITY

1. Employees shall have the right to support candidates of their choice and to engage in political activity during their personal time. Walker County expressly prohibits retaliation on the basis of political involvement or expression, subject to the rules described below.

2. Employees shall not:

- a. Use their official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the result of any election or nomination for office;
- b. 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;
- c. Engage in political activity during working hours with the exception of employees whose job duties specifically require them to do so as indicated in the Election Code; or
- d. Use County resources for political activity and shall not engage in any political activity during their scheduled work hours.

3. In the event that an employee chooses to run for an elected position in the office for which they work, against an incumbent that seeks re-election, the employee shall refer to the Texas Constitution, applicable laws or regulations to determine if he/she must resign their position at the time they file for any primary election, the date of filing of a write-in petition, or at the time they are nominated for the sought-after elected position, whichever comes first.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: Revised 4/13/98 Effective 4/13/98 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 5/10/10 Amended 6/1/15

2.14 DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

The objective of this policy is to develop a drug and alcohol-free work place which will help insure a safe and productive work place and to provide education and treatment to our employees. In order to further this objective, the following rules regarding alcohol and illegal drugs in the work place have been established.

POLICY

1. Federal and state law governs whether drugs and alcohol addiction constitute "disabilities," and this policy is not intended to confer rights beyond those currently provided under the law.
2. The manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, sale, purchase or use of a controlled substance on county property is prohibited. The exception to possession of controlled substances is law enforcement personnel as a part of their duties or medically authorized prescriptions in an authorized labelled container.
3. Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs on county property is prohibited.
4. Employees who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
5. The policy applies to all employees regardless of rank or position and includes temporary and part-time employees.

DEFINITIONS

6. County Premises – All county property including but not limited to buildings, vehicles, lockers and parking lots.
7. County Property – All county owned or leased property used by employees such as buildings, vehicles, lockers, desks, closets, etc.
8. Controlled Substance – Any substance that produces physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral change in the user.
9. Drug – A drug is any chemical substance that produces physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral change in the user.
10. Drug Paraphernalia – Equipment, a product or material that is used or intended for use in concealing an illegal drug or for use in injecting, ingesting, inhaling, or otherwise introducing into the human body an illegal drug or controlled substance.
11. Fitness for Duty – To work in a manner suitable for the job. To determine "fitness", a medical evaluation may include drug and/or alcohol testing.
12. Illegal Drug – An illegal drug is any drug or derivative thereof which the use, possession, sale, transfer, attempted sale or transfer, manufacture or storage of is illegal or regulated under any federal, state, or local law or regulation and any other drug, including (but not limited to) a prescription drug, used for any reason and inhalants used illegally. Included is marijuana or cannabis in all forms.
13. Reasonable Cause/Reasonable Suspicion – Supported by evidence strong enough to establish that a policy violation has occurred.
14. Legally Intoxicated – A state of having blood alcohol concentration of 0.08 or more, where "alcohol concentration" has the meaning assigned to it in Section 49.01 Penal Code, Revised Statutes; or the state of not having the normal use of mental or physical faculties resulting from the voluntary introduction into the body of an alcoholic beverage or a controlled substance.

15. Under the Influence – A state of not having the normal use of mental or physical faculties resulting from the voluntary introduction into the body of any intoxicating substance including but not limited to alcohol, prescription medication, narcotics and/or a controlled substance, etc.

GENERAL POLICY PROVISIONS

Any of the following actions constitutes a violation of the Policy and may subject an employee to disciplinary action including immediate termination:

16. Using, selling, purchasing, transferring, possessing, manufacturing, or storing an illegal drug or drug paraphernalia, or attempting or assisting another to do so, while in the course of employment or engaged in a County sponsored activity, on premises, in owned, leased or rented vehicles, or on business.

17. Working or reporting to work, conducting county business, or being on premises or in a county - owned, leased, or rented vehicle while under the influence of an illegal drug, alcohol, or in an impaired condition.

PREVENTIVE ACTS

18. Employees taking drugs prescribed by an attending physician must advise their direct supervisor in writing of the possible effects of such medication regarding their job performance and physical/mental capabilities. This written information must be kept confidential and communicated to the direct supervisor prior to the employee commencing work. All medical information will be kept confidential and the employer, without exception, will appropriately discipline any breach of privacy and confidentiality in this regard. All prescription drugs must be kept in their original container.

NEW HIRES

19. Walker County shall require an applicant for whom a conditional offer of employment has been made in a position requiring a commercial driver's license or involving public safety, use of firearms, or high risk safety-sensitive tasks to submit to a drug test. A negative test result is required.

CORRECTIVE ACTION

20. Any employee involved in a work related accident shall have a post-accident drug and alcohol test as soon as reasonably possible but not more than 8 hours after the accident in addition to any other accident investigation activities.

21. Refusal by an employee to submit to testing will be considered cause for termination.

22. When, as determined by the elected official/department head, reasonable grounds exist to believe that an employee is impaired or an employee's unsatisfactory behavior or job performance reasonably suggest to management that substance abuse may be a contributing factor, the County reserves the right to require an immediate fitness for duty examination such as a medical examination which may include drug and/or alcohol testing. Refusal to participate in such an evaluation shall be considered equivalent to a positive result and shall result in immediate dismissal.

23. Return to work drug and alcohol testing shall be required.

CONSEQUENCES

24. A positive test shall mean either the presence of a drug and/or alcohol. Sample testing procedures shall conform to scientifically accepted analytical methods and procedures and shall include confirmation of any positive test result by gas chromatography, mass spectroscopy, or other comparably reliable analytical method, before the results of any test may be used as a basis for any action. Both screening and confirmed urine will follow the guidelines adopted by the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

- a. When a screening test is positive for the first time but no evidence of drug or alcohol use on the job exists, the employee will be suspended until the County required testing and treatment is completed and has a release to return to work. If there is evidence of drug or alcohol use on the job, the employee may be disciplined or discharged and not eligible for reinstatement.
- b. To be reinstated to a job, an employee must have a signed release from a medical doctor stating that he/she is fit for duty and a negative drug and/or alcohol test result. The employee must submit to another screening test and have a negative result within six weeks from the date he/she was suspended; otherwise, the employee will be discharged. The County will decide when the test shall be administered. Before the employee returns to work, he/she will be required to sign a reinstatement agreement that states under what conditions the employee will be reinstated and that random drug testing may be conducted for one year.
- c. An employee who has been suspended for a positive drug or alcohol test and allowed to return to work may be discharged for a positive result on any confirmatory drug test.

POLICY PARAMETERS

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

The County will use only laboratories that are certified under appropriate federal and/or state regulations. The laboratories should follow the guidelines adopted by the United States Department of Health and Human Services for work place urinalysis.

Only conclusive results are to be reported to the County. A positive urinalysis test will be confirmed by a second test using gas chromatography or mass spectroscopy. Both tests resulting in a negative presence of substances shall be reported to the County.

SUPERVISORY AND EMPLOYEE TRAINING

26. Elected officials, department heads and supervisors are encouraged to attend training regarding the Drug and Alcohol Policy. All employees will receive copies of the Drug and Alcohol Policy and information about drug and alcohol education.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

27. Any employee suspected of violating this Policy may be immediately suspended without pay pending completion of an investigation. During the course of an investigation, the suspected employee shall have the opportunity to provide an explanation. In the event that a determination is made by the County that the employee violated this policy, the employee shall be terminated. Should the determination be made that no violation accrued, the employee will be reinstated without penalty and will be paid any lost wages.

COORDINATION WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

28. The sale, use, purchase, transfer or possession of an illegal drug or drug paraphernalia is a violation of the law. The County will report information concerning possession, distribution, or use of any illegal drugs to law enforcement officials and will turn over to the custody of law enforcement officials any such substances found during a search of an individual or property. Searches will only be conducted of individuals based on reasonable suspicion. The County will cooperate fully in the prosecution and/or conviction of any violation of the law.

RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

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

Although adherence to this Policy is considered a condition of continued employment, nothing in this Policy alters an employee's status and shall not constitute nor be deemed a contract or promise of employment. Employees remain free to resign their employment at any time for any or no reason, without notice, and the County retains the right to terminate any employee at any time, for any legal reason or no reason, without notice.

OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

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

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/24/93 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 6/1/15 Amended 06/18/2018
Amended 09/13/2021

2.15 POLICY ON WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

1. Walker County is committed to providing equal employment opportunity to all applicants and employees in all its employment practices and to providing a work environment free of discrimination and/or harassment on the basis of race, color, age, religion, national origin, sex, genetic information, pregnancy, disability, veteran or Vietnam era veteran status, the filing of workers' compensation claim in good faith, or any other category protected by law. This Policy applies to all aspects of employment including, but not limited to, recruitment, selection, hiring, training, promotions, transfers, discipline/counseling, pay rates, benefit plans, termination of employment, and all other forms of compensation and benefits except where required by federal and state law or where a bona fide occupational qualification exists. Walker County is also committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act and will provide reasonable accommodation to applicants and employees when such reasonable accommodations do not impose an undue hardship on Walker County and can be provided without posing a substantial or imminent safety risk. Individuals with a disability requiring accommodations should notify their elected official or department head. Human Resources is available to provide assistance when such requests are made.

An employee who is found, after appropriate investigation, to have violated this Policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

POLICY PROHIBITING HARASSMENT

2. Walker County will not tolerate harassment of any employee by any elected official, appointed official, department head, supervisor, employee, co-worker, or non-employee of Walker County, on account of an employee's race, color, age, religion, national origin, sex, genetic information, pregnancy, family medical leave, disability, veteran or Vietnam era veteran status, the filing of workers' compensation claim in good faith, or any other category protected by law. For these purposes, the term harassment includes, but is not limited to slurs, offensive remarks, jokes, other verbal and/or graphic messages and/or communications, (including, but not limited to, e-mail, internet and/or any other computer generated messages or communications) or physical conduct relating to an individual's race, color, age, religion, national origin, sex, genetic information, pregnancy, disability, veteran or Vietnam era veteran status, or any category protected by law.

In furtherance of this Policy against harassment, Walker County does not condone and will not permit harassment of any employee and will not tolerate unwelcome sexual advances to any employee, remarks, slurs or jokes offensive to any employee because of his-her sex.

An employee who is found, after appropriate investigation, to have violated this Policy prohibiting harassment, will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES: PREVENTATIVE AND CORRECTIVE PROCEDURES

3. Walker County is committed to prevent, correct promptly, and eradicate discrimination and harassment, including, but not limited to, sexual harassment in the workplace. Any employee who believes they have been subjected to unlawful harassment or retaliation shall immediately report their complaint to their supervisor (see Policy 7.01 Grievances and Grievance Procedures). If, for any reason, including, but not limited to, the reason that the supervisor is the party that has allegedly engaged in the discriminatory and/or harassing conduct, or in the event that an employee is not comfortable or able to speak with his/her supervisor for any reason, the employee shall immediately report the act to the County Judge or Human Resources. The complaint should be filed as soon as possible after the events that resulted in the complaint. Walker County will promptly investigate all complaints for violation of this Policy in as discreet and confidential manner as possible and will take prompt remedial action.

Walker County cannot help resolve discrimination and/or harassment problem unless we know about it. Therefore, it is the employee's responsibility to bring such issues to the County's attention so that whatever steps are necessary can be taken to correct the issues and to maintain a harassment-free environment.

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NO RETALIATION

4. Walker County prohibits retaliation against any employee for the use of this complaint procedure in good faith. In furtherance of this Policy, an employee who retaliates against a complaining party or witness will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

CONFIDENTIALITY

5. Information concerning a complaint of harassment will not be released to third parties or to anyone within Walker County except on a need-to-know basis or as required by law. The purpose of this provision, among other things, is to protect the confidentiality of the employee who files a complaint, to encourage the reporting of any alleged incident of discrimination and/or harassment without fear of retaliation, and to protect the reputation of any employee wrongfully charged with discrimination and/or harassment.

SANCTIONS

6. An employee who is found after appropriate investigation to have violated this Policy, prohibiting discrimination and/or harassment, will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

OPEN-DOOR POLICY

7. Walker County has an open-door policy to ensure that employee problems, concerns and/or complaints are heard. Employees are encouraged to contact their supervisor if they have a problem, concern or complaint. Employees are also encouraged to seek information, provide input, and resolve problems, concerns, and/or complaints through their supervisor. In the event that the employee's problem, concern and/or complaint concerns the supervisor, or if the employee feels that it would be inappropriate to discuss the problem, concern and/or complaint with their supervisor, then the employee may bypass their supervisor and contact the County Judge or Human Resources. Complaints should be filed as soon as possible after the event resulting in the complaint. Employees will not be penalized for the use of this procedure.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: REVISED 7/28/97 EFFECTIVE 7/28/97 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 12/08/08
Amended 5/10/10 Amended 6/1/15

2.15a POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT

POLICY PROHIBITING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

1. Sexual harassment is strictly prohibited by Walker County, whether committed by an elected official, department head, co-worker or non-employee the County does business with. It is the policy of Walker 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.

SANCTIONS

2. Employees engaging in sexual harassment shall be subject to discipline up to and including termination. 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.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

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

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

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

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

The following procedures should be used so that a complaint maybe resolved:

- 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.
- c. Report continuing sexual harassment to the elected official or department head who is responsible for the department, to the County Judge or the Human Resources.
- d. If a thorough investigation reveals that unlawful sexual harassment has occurred, Walker County will take effective remedial action in accordance with the circumstances, up to and including termination.

RETALIATION PROHIBITED

4. 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 or department head who is responsible for the department in which they work. If, for any reason, the employee feels that reporting the retaliation to the elected official or department head may not be the best course of action, the report should be made to the County Judge or to Human Resources.

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RECOURSE

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

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 6/1/15

2.16 POLICY ON EMPLOYEE PARKING

EMPLOYEE PARKING

1. All employees working in owned and/or leased office space by Walker County are required to park their vehicles in the areas provided for employee parking.

EXCEPTIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

2.

- a. Employees who in their regular work day must leave their office to travel to another location to conduct business on behalf of Walker County.
- b. Employees who contract with an individual or company to rent a separate parking space.
- c. Employees exempt from City of Huntsville Parking Ordinance Code.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/8/95 Amended 6/1/15

2.17 POLICY ON EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION AND SECURITY CARD/BADGE

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of the Walker County employee card/badge is to ensure each employee is readily identified as an employee and provide the opportunity to challenge those individuals who have no legitimate business in certain areas of county facilities. An official ID card is also issued to those employees in certain departments who have a need for an official identification whether on-site or traveling. The use of employee badges will facilitate identification to the public, county officials and personnel, as well as provide access to secured areas as authorized by an elected official or department head.
2. This policy provides guidelines in order to obtain, wear, and replace employee identification cards allowing access to the Walker County Courthouse and facilities. The Human Resource/Treasurer's Office will produce all cards; the Information Technology Department will administer security access to County buildings with the card access system.

POLICY

1. All full-time and part-time employees are required to wear, or maintain in their personal possession a Walker County identification card/badge at all times while performing County business. If wearing a badge on the outside of an employee's clothing presents a safety hazard, employees may retain their ID card/badge in their wallet or otherwise in their personal possession.
2. Each employee entering a secured area must use his/her own Employee ID card for only his/her personal entry. Employees are prohibited from using their Employee ID card to allow access to secured areas to any unauthorized person. A violation may result in disciplinary action up to and including the termination of employment.

ISSUE

1. Equipment and software, necessary for ID cards to be processed, will be housed and operated by the Walker County Human Resource/Treasurer's Office. An accurate and complete database will be maintained for all cards issued and backed up within the County network system.
2. Elected Officials or Department Heads will ensure that all new and current employees are provided with a request of the Walker County Identification form (ID-1). County employees will then take the form to the Human Resource/Treasurer's Office to obtain their ID card/badge. The form must contain the signature of the authorizing department head approving the creation of the ID card/badge.
3. The Elected Officials or Department Heads will authorize an employee security access level as it relates to the individuals job description, facility secured areas and days and times access is to be permitted (to include after hour access). The Elected Official or Department Head will then submit this to the Information Technology Department for processing.

RETIRED EMPLOYEES IDENTIFICATION CARD/BADGE

1. All retired employees are eligible to receive an identification card/badge with "Retired" stated on the ID card/badge data. However, retired employees will be required to pass through security screening even with a photo ID card.

CARD/BADGE DATA

1. ID cards and badges will contain, at a minimum, the Walker County name & seal, a photo of the employee, the name of the employee, the issue date, and the department name. Official ID cards will also contain a holographic or other type anti-counterfeiting mark. Depending on the type of card system utilized, the cards may contain signatures, bar codes, and other identifying data.

SECURITY SCREENING CHECKPOINT

1. The Sheriff's Office is statutorily responsible for courthouse security.
2. County employees may enter the courthouse without being required to enter through the security screening checkpoint process **ONLY** if they have their County Identification.
 - a. County employees at the courthouse for personal business may not use their County ID or status with the County to bypass the screening system and must go through the security clearance as any non-county employee and/or citizen.
 - b. Any employee at the courthouse on personal business should notify their department head and it will be the department head's responsibility to notify the courthouse security desk with that information.
3. Elected Officials with offices within the courthouse and appropriate ID may at any time enter for any purpose.
4. Active law enforcement officers with proper identification will be allowed to bypass the security screening checkpoint if they are at the courthouse for job related duties.
 - a. Active Law Enforcement Officers may not bypass security screening if at the courthouse for any purpose outside the scope of his/her duties.
5. Visitors, contractors and vendors must enter through the security screening area.
6. All incoming packages and mail being delivered to the courthouse will be screened through the X-ray machine.
7. Employees who do not possess their ID card/badge **WILL NOT** be allowed to bypass security screening and will be required to submit to security screening for entry to the courthouse.
8. There may be times of heightened security or other circumstances when security personnel will require employees to submit to security screening upon entering the courthouse. These circumstances will be determined by the Sheriff or designee.
9. For security reasons an Elected Official, employee or visitor may be asked to leave or exit the property by Law Enforcement.

JUROR ID

1. Juror ID cards will serve as identification and will not include photograph but are assigned numeric numbers by the District Clerk's office who will be responsible for the handling of these ID cards.

ATTORNEY ID

1. Attorneys in good standing with the State Bar of Texas can purchase an annual Attorney ID card in order to bypass the security screening checkpoint for an annual fee of \$50.00 through the Walker County Human Resource/Treasurer's Office. The Human Resource/Treasurer's Office will provide the Attorney with the appropriate form (Attorney ID-1) and issue the Attorney ID card.
2. The holder of an Attorney ID card will serve as identification and will normally allow the Attorney identified on the ID to bypass security screening at the courthouse. However, the ID holder must follow instructions of the security personnel.
3. Attorneys with an ID card/badge at the courthouse for personal business may not use their Attorney ID or status to bypass the screening system and must go through the security clearance as a private citizen.

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4. Violations of any portion of this policy or failing to follow instructions of security personnel could result with the Attorney ID being revoked by the Sheriff.
5. Attorney ID cards will not have a white background resembling that of an employee ID card. The card will contain, at a minimum the Walker County name and seal, a photo of the attorney, the name of the attorney, bar number, law firm name, issue date and date of expiration.

SECURITY ACCESS LEVELS

1. County Maintenance: Security clearance to the courthouse, 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday only. Maintenance will need to be let into the building by one of the elected officials for any emergency that occurs after hours.
2. Custodial: Security clearance to the courthouse, 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday only.
3. Community Service Volunteers: No form of ID will be made for these individuals. Custodial or maintenance will allow volunteers access to the courthouse and be responsible for their departure.

LOST/STOLEN ID CARDS

1. It is the responsibility of each employee to account for the whereabouts of his/her card. Any lost or stolen card must be immediately reported to the employee's Elected Official/Department Head and the Walker County Human Resource/Treasurer's Office. Employees will be required to pay a minimum of \$3.00 for replacement of lost and/or defaced cards. Walker County will replace cards destroyed due to normal wear and tear at no cost to the employee.

RETURN OF ID CARDS

1. Upon leaving employment with Walker County, all employees are required to return issued ID/Badge cards to their Elected Official or Department Head who will forward the card/badge to the **Walker County Human Resource/Treasurer's Office**.
2. All ID cards/badges issued by Walker County remain the property of the County.

DEFINITIONS

1. Identification Card: Official identification as being employed with the County and may include signatures, bar codes and other identifying data.
2. Security Access Card: Is identical to the ID card but has the ability to allow entry and exit ability via a proximity card reader, also referred to as a Door Access Card.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 12/12/05 REVISED 12/19/05 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 6/1/15 Amended 3/14/16
Amended 09/13/2021

2.18 POLICY ON PROCUREMENT CARDS

1. Cardholder must agree to abide by any and all procurement and travel policies, procedures, statutes, or legislation present or future while using this Procurement Card.
2. Cardholder must agree that the use of the Procurement Card is not for personal use and that misuse of the card can result in termination of the Procurement Card.
3. Cardholder must agree fuel for personal vehicles and employee meals may not be charged to a Procurement Card and that fuel for personal vehicles and employee meals shall be reimbursed on a travel expense form or requested by providing detailed receipts attached to a check request.
4. Cardholder must agree employees not issued a fuel card may use the Procurement Card for intermittent fuel purchases for county vehicles while traveling on county business, otherwise a fuel card shall be used when accepted with the area.
5. Cardholder must agree each charge to the Procurement Card must be properly documented with a detailed receipt and supporting documents.
6. Cardholder must agree no sales tax shall be charged on any County credit cards.
7. Cardholder must agree all purchases of supplies or services are to be documented with a detailed receipt and/or documentation supporting each charge and approval for payment.
8. Cardholder must agree that a travel form with original receipts attached and detailed documentation for describing the purpose of the travel must be provided for travel related charges to the Procurement Card.
9. Cardholder must agree the Procurement Card is a form of payment and in no way shall circumvent the procurement process.
10. Cardholder must agree that with exceptions for special circumstances, all invoices, proper documentation and authorization for payment must be submitted within ten (10) business days of the statement notification for the Procurement Card. If documentation is not provided my card could be suspended for 90 days without exception and after two (2) suspensions within one (1) calendar year card privileges will be terminated.
11. Cardholder must agree the procurement Card shall be surrendered immediately upon separation of employment.
12. Cardholder must agree the Cardholder shall be responsible for personal payment of invoices and charges due to lost receipts or receipts not received. The Cardholder shall reimburse the County through the Treasurer's Office immediately.

Reference the Walker County Procurement Card Policy and Procedures Manual as Adopted by Commissioners Court on June 25, 2018.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 9/15/03 Amended 5/12/08 Amended 6/1/2015 Amended 06/25/2018

2.19 POLICY ON ASSET MANAGEMENT including inventory maintained at the department level

FIXED ASSETS AND INVENTORY

1. A fixed asset of the County is defined as a purchased or otherwise acquired piece of equipment, furniture, fixture, capital improvement; infrastructure addition, or addition to existing land, buildings, etc. For financial reporting purposes, a fixed asset's cost or value is \$5,000 or more, with an expected useful life greater than one year infrastructure or building improvement at a cost of \$25,000 or more that will extend the life more than five years.

CENTRALIZED REPORTING

2. An asset with a cost of than \$1,000 susceptible to loss will be maintained as part of a central reporting system for five years from date of acquisition. These assets will be included in the annual physical inventory by the purchasing department. After that period, the assets with a cost \$5,000 or less may be purged from the central reporting system.

MAINTENANCE OF PHYSICAL ASSETS

3. The County will maintain its physical assets at a level adequate to protect the County's capital investment and minimize future maintenance and replacement costs. The budget will provide for the adequate maintenance and the orderly replacement of fixed assets.

SAFEGUARDING OF ASSETS

4. The County's fixed assets will be reasonably safeguarded and properly accounted for. Responsibility for the safeguarding of the County's fixed assets lies with the department head or elected official in whose department the fixed asset is assigned. Each department is responsible for maintaining a list of assets in their departments.

MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

5. The County shall accurately maintain records of fixed assets. The Purchasing department shall be responsible for tagging all assets for identification and maintaining titles, assigning asset numbers for items that meet the centralized reporting requirements outlined in Section 2. The Purchasing department shall maintain information in the asset software system necessary to meet the annual statutory asset inventory requirement. It shall be the responsibility of the Purchasing Agent to provide source documents to the County Auditor Office for the financial records. The written information provided shall include a complete description of the assets including the make, model, identification number or serial number, cost, department of responsibility, date of acquisition, current condition of the asset, tag number, and documents provided by the vendor and insurance carriers. Information is to be provided in a clearly marked folder identifying the asset. The purchasing department shall promptly (within 10 business days) provide the County Auditor documentation for all entries including adds, changes, and deletes.

Department heads and elected officials shall provide information on the designated forms for recording transfers and deletions of assets as the change occurs. Records of land and rights-of-way shall be maintained in the Utility Department. The County Auditor will be responsible for depreciation of assets and classification of assets for the financial reporting system. The Purchasing department will maintain current files for all tagged assets. A detail list of asset disposed of at auction including the asset number and tag number or id shall be provided to the County Auditor within 30 days of the auction.

MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS-ROAD AND BRIDGE PRECINCTS

6. Each Precinct shall be responsible for tagging/otherwise marking all assets for identification, maintaining a list, and supporting records for assets and inventory maintained in the

department for accountability and insurance purposes for those assets that are not maintained on the centralized assets reporting system. This list shall be made available to the Purchasing Department and County Auditor and review of assets against the listing and documentation will be part of the annual physical inventory by the Purchasing department. A physical inventory by the Precinct shall be conducted at least once each year. On or before May 1st of each year, a full inventory of these assets and inventory shall be conducted by the Precinct, records updated, and a report of the inventory findings, and current listing provided to the Purchasing Agent and County Auditor. A Commissioner may elect to have the assets recorded in the centralized asset reporting system to assist them in their record keeping. Each commissioner shall prepare a policy for inventory management to be followed for the accountability of inventory maintained by the department.

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MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS-FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

7. The department head responsible for facilities management shall be responsible for tagging/otherwise marking assets for identification, maintaining a list, and supporting records for assets and inventory maintained in the department for accountability and insurance purposes for those and inventory that are not maintained on the centralized assets reporting system. This list shall be made available to the Purchasing Department and County Auditor and review of assets against the listing and documentation will be part of the annual physical inventory by the Purchasing department. A physical inventory by the department head shall be conducted at least once each year. On or before May of each year, a full inventory of these assets and inventory shall be conducted by the department head, records updated, and a report of the inventory findings, and current listing provided to the Purchasing Agent and County Auditor. The department head may elect to have the assets recorded in the centralized asset reporting system to assist them in their record keeping. The department head shall prepare a policy for inventory management to be followed for the accountability of inventory maintained by the department

ANNUAL INVENTORY

8. The Purchasing Agent in accordance with state law shall perform an annual inventory of assets. The inventory should include actual viewing by the purchasing department of the assets maintained in the assets records system, unless there are specifically approved exceptions by the Commissioners' Court. Such inventory shall be performed in conjunction with the department head or elected official or a designated agent. A detailed listing shall be used and a complete review shall be made of all assigned fixed assets. A list signed by the Purchasing Agent and department head or elected official acknowledging the completeness and accuracy of the inventory shall be provided no later than July 1 of each year to the County Auditor as required by State Law.

INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE

9. The County recognizes that deferred maintenance increases future capital costs. Funds shall be included in the budget requests each year to maintain the quality of the County's infrastructure.

SCHEDULED REPLACEMENT OF ASSETS

10. As part of the ongoing replacement of assets, the County shall work towards development of an equipment replacement plan.

DELETION OF ASSETS FROM FINANCIAL REPORTS & INVENTORY LISTINGS

11. Assets that are disposed of by the Purchasing Agent in accordance with state law may be removed from the records upon disposal of the asset (auction, trade in, destruction etc.) and

notification made to the County Auditor. Removal for any reasons other than disposal of assets by the Purchasing agent in accordance with State Law or removal for tagged assets as defined under Section 2. of this policy requires approval of the Commissioners' Court.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT ON 9/15/2003

DATE: Amended 4/12/04 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 12/8/08 Amended 9/10/12 Amended 9/9/13:
Amended 06/05/2023

2.20 POLICY ON EXPENDITURES AND BUDGET AMENDMENT

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT ON 9/13/04

DATE: Amended by FY2005-2006 Budget/Adopted 9/5/05 Amended 9/10/12

Policy removed and adopted in the County Budget for the Fiscal Year October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015 and adopted annually as a part of the Budget process.

2.21 POLICY ON PC REPLACEMENT AND INSTALLED SOFTWARE

EQUIPMENT

1. The County will provide operating funds for equipment and software necessary for the elected officials and department heads to perform their duties.

APPROPRIATIONS

2. Appropriations for equipment will be part of the budget process. Purchases from budgeted funds may be made during the year with appropriate budget adjustments. Generally, PCs are eligible for replacement after four years of use and/or when the PC no longer can meet its expected performance criteria. Unless there are special circumstances a five year warranty is preferred. Server replacement is based on supported need.

CENTRAL CONTROL

3. Equipment needs should be forwarded to the IT department for appropriate configuration of the system.

SOFTWARE-OPERATING SYSTEM

4. Upon replacement of the hardware, the operating system shall be replaced as recommended by IT or as otherwise determined by IT.

CONCURRENT PURCHASES

5. As purchasing places an order for equipment, purchase orders for any required software licenses should be placed concurrently. No purchases of equipment shall be made without the appropriate software licensing.

SOFTWARE LICENSES

6. No software may be installed on the PC that the department or IT cannot provide proof of a current license. IT will review with the department the appropriate version of the software to be placed on the equipment.

DOCUMENTATION OF SOFTWARE LICENSES

7. No equipment may be purchased until there is software license verification from IT.

SOFTWARE INSTALLATION

8. It is unlawful for any unlicensed software to be placed on County equipment. The department head/elected official assumes responsibility for assuring that only licensed software is on the PCs under their supervision.

SOFTWARE/HARDWARE FOR WORK PURPOSES ONLY

9. Departments shall not download programs, files etc. that are not strictly necessary for county work. Any downloaded programs or files must be specifically listed on the software list maintained for each PC. Instant messaging, games, and music, are not to be on PCs except as installed by IT. Screen savers must be approved by IT and listed on the program list.

HARDWARE/SOFTWARE INVENTORY

10. At the time of request for new equipment, the department shall provide to the purchasing department a complete inventory of all PCs and printers in their department.

EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT SCHEDULE

11. After information is obtained through the purchase process, a master list of equipment shall be maintained by the Purchasing department and software licensing shall be maintained shall be IT department.

DISPOSAL

12. All disposals of equipment shall be through the purchasing agent.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 9/13/04 ADOPTED FY2005-2006 BUDGET 9/6/05 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 5/10/10
Amended 6/1/15 Amended 09/14/2015

2.22 POLICY ON MEALS, BEVERAGES AND SUPPLYING REFRESHMENTS FOR MEETINGS

PURPOSE

1. In general, it shall be the policy of Walker County to not provide food/meals/beverages for county employees while at work in Walker County with the following exceptions:

- a. Paving Crew – Commissioners' may provide lunch at the paving site at county expense charged to their precinct budget for county employees and inmates working on the paving crew on county maintained roads for the purpose of having no interruptions during the paving process. To support the public purpose of the charge, documentation including the location of the paving site and a list of employees and inmates paving, shall be presented along with all receipts for reimbursement or payment. Requisitions are required for all purchases of supplies as required by state law. Cost per person shall not exceed \$12.00.
- b. Jail employees, Meals at Jail – On-duty jailers due to the job assignment that prohibits them from leaving the work place may eat meals as provided by the jail. All other persons consuming food purchased by the county at the jail must reimburse the cost of the meal as determined by the sheriff. A list of persons and date along with the funds collected shall be turned in to the County Treasurer for deposit into the General Fund.
- c. Emergency situations – Road & Bridge personnel and others assisting during natural disaster clean-ups (that require persons to be called out on weekends, holidays or late at night) and responders to Public Safety Emergency or Special Circumstances may be provided meals and drinks up to \$12.00 per person per meal with approval of the elected official(s) responsible for oversight of the occurrence. Documentation shall be provided.
- d. Inmates – Jail inmate labor used routinely may be provided the following to compensate for their assistance.
 - Soft drinks and Gatorade
 - Coffee, creamer, sugar
 - Snack foods (cookies, crackers, candy bars, etc.)
- e. Emergency Medical Services – Coffee and related supplies may be purchased and used for 24 hour duty crews.
- f. Departments under Sheriff Supervision – Coffee and related supplies not provided under the Jail food contract may be purchased from County funds and used by employees during their work hours.

2. No expenditures for parties, events, retirements, etc. shall be made without specific advance approval of Commissioners' Court.

3. Meals/beverages/refreshments for all-day on-site training or organizational meeting shall be allowable only if approved by Commissioners' Court.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT ON 9/13/2004

DATE: Amended 9/18/06 Amended 8/20/07 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 9/9/13 Amended 10/13/15
Amended 11/16/15 Amended 09/13/21

2.23 POLICY ON OFFICE DÉCOR

1. It shall be the policy of Walker County to not purchase decorative items for offices of individuals.
2. Décor for common areas, hallways, entry areas, court rooms, conference rooms etc. shall be purchased from county funds only with specific approval of Commissioners' Court. The elected official/department head shall present an itemized list and graphic of item(s) requested. The items proposed shall generally be reflective of the office or service provided and/or depictive of national, Texas, local, history, landscape or geography. Art prints may be allowable at the option of Commissioners' Court.
3. The County shall allow purchase of one name plate per employee. All other office items including document frames, card holders, etc. shall not be personalized and must be generic for any individual who may occupy the office.
4. Common areas of county facilities décor shall follow the guidelines as described in #2 regardless of the source of funding for décor.
5. Design and content of signage placed on the exterior and interior of county facilities shall be approved by Commissioners' Court.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 9/13/04 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 6/1/15

2.24 POLICY ON USE OF PERSONAL HEATER IN COUNTY FACILITIES

REGULATING TEMPERATURES

1. Commissioners' Court discourages the use of personal heaters in county facilities and prefers that elected officials/department heads work with the Maintenance Department in regulating temperatures in the offices. In the event, this cannot be accomplished, personal heaters are permissible.

SELECTION OF HEATERS

2. Selection of heaters shall be coordinated through the Purchasing Agent. The Purchasing Agent shall make safety features and energy efficiency a priority in selecting heaters. Space heaters must be approved by a Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratory (NRTL), such as Underwriters Laboratory, Inc. (UL). Those not approved, should not be used. Space heaters must have an automatic safety switch (tip-over switch) that turns the unit off if it is tipped over. They must have a thermostatic control which turns off the unit preventing over heating or creating an electrical hazard.

PLACEMENT OF HEATERS

3. Heaters shall be placed to ensure that the safety of employees, citizens, documents, equipment and facilities are protected. No personal heaters shall ever be plugged into an outlet that computer equipment is on.

GENERAL FIRE SAFETY

4. As with all electrical equipment, general fire safety guidelines shall be followed.

ASCERTAIN THAT SUFFICIENT CIRCUITS/BREAKERS ARE AVAILABLE

5. Prior to placement of a heater in an area, the Maintenance shall be contacted to assure that sufficient circuits/breakers are available in the building/area.

UNPLUG HEATERS WHEN NOT IN USE

6. Heaters are to be unplugged when not in use.

MONITORING BY ELECTED OFFICIALS/DEPARTMENT HEADS

7. Elected officials/department heads are asked to help ensure safety and enforcement of this Policy.

MONITORING BY MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT

8. The Maintenance Department personnel shall report safety issues to the elected official/department head and in the event the issues are not resolved, shall immediately report the safety issue to Commissioners' Court.

PROPER USE

9. Space heaters should be kept away from water and wet environments to avoid shock. Space heaters must be kept at least three feet away from any combustible items, such as paper, furniture, draperies, etc. Space heaters should not be used with an extension cord and should not be used if they have missing or broken parts, such as knobs, grills or stands. Employees should check power cords and make sure cords are in good condition and not pinched, worn, frayed or missing the ground prong.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 2/7/05 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 6/1/15

2.25 POLICY ON ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES

1. Elected officials and department heads will determine who in their department or immediate area of supervision will be provided with county paid electronic communication devices (such as cell phones, smart phones, pagers, blackberries or other communication devices). Electronic communication devices are part of the budget process and will not be provided for elected officials.
2. Elected officials and department heads will determine who in their department or immediate area of supervision will be provided with iPads or similar devices. Once the business need is identified and purchase approved by Commissioners' Court, connection will be allowed to the County network only thru methods approved by the IT Department. The devices are solely for county purposes and downloaded apps shall be limited to those necessary to conduct county business.
3. For those employees who are provided an electronic communications device by the County, those employees are responsible for all calls and other communications made or transmitted from device. The devices are provided for official Walker County business and personal use of the device is discouraged and should be minimized. Audits which reveal excessive personal use of County provided devices could result in the loss of use of the device, and possibly additional disciplinary action up to and including termination.
4. Communication devices provided by the County shall not be used for personal or political gain; illegal, fraudulent or malicious activity; political activity; entertainment (including games, radio, and video); or activity on behalf of organizations or individuals. Employees who use their own personal communications device (not County provided) in the course and scope of their employment are prohibited from using the device in violation of any County policy regarding inappropriate communications or conduct.
5. Any additional devices/services required after the budget is set for the year requires approval from Commissioners' Court. All requests for new service or equipment must be sent to the Purchasing Department in the form of a purchase requisition. A review of prior usage will be a consideration in the approval process. All requests for changes in service must be sent to the Purchasing Department in writing. Essential service/equipment upgrades should be limited to the upgrade schedule as allowed by contract or changes as recommended by the Purchasing Agent for cost savings or service requirements.
6. All service/equipment charges will be charged to the individual departments. The County reserves the right to assign the appropriate devices/usage plan for all County paid services.
7. Walker County employees will not be provided more than one device/service without specific approval of Commissioners' Court.
8. Employees in the possession of county owned cell phones are required to take appropriate precautions to prevent theft and vandalism. Replacement of damaged, stolen or lost equipment due to employee negligence is the responsibility of the employee. Negligence and the assessed value shall be determined by the Commissioners' Court. Based on the assessed value, nonexempt employees shall have the amount deducted from their paycheck, and exempt employees shall make payment to the County through the Treasurer's Office. Broken or discarded phones and accessories shall be returned to the Purchasing Agent.
9. A list of employees with county provided electronic communications devices shall be provided to Commissioners' Court at the beginning of each budget year by the Purchasing Agent and allowable devices/services shall be approved by Commissioners' Court. No additions/changes that increase the cost of service shall be made without formal court approval and preferably takes place during budget discussions.
10. An employee receiving a communication device/service or allowance paid by the County shall be required to sign for receipt of this policy and agree to use the device/service in accordance with this policy.

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11. As set forth in Policy 9.01, Network Communications, employees shall have no expectation of privacy with respect to any electronic communication device provided by Walker County. For those employees who use their own communications device (not provided by the County) in the course and scope of their employment, the employees should preserve any work related emails, texts or other communications in accordance with the Texas Public Information Act and make such work related communications available for reasonable review and inspection.

12. As set forth in Policy 2.28, Vehicle Safety and Seat Belt Use, employees are prohibited from typing, sending, receiving and viewing email, text, or other electronic communications while driving any vehicle in the course and scope of their employment for Walker County. Employees operating electronic equipment authorized for law enforcement and emergency services vehicles shall follow applicable laws and department policies and procedures.

13. Employees receiving a reimbursement are required to provide their device number to the Purchasing Agent and immediately notify the Purchasing Agent if the number is changed.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 9/26/05 Amended 8/20/07 Amended 12/8/08 Amended 8/16/10 Amended 12/5/11 Amended 4/23/12
Amended 6/1/15

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Employee Acknowledgment of Receipt of Wireless Communication Device Policy 2.25

I have received the Wireless Communication Device Policy (2.25) as adopted by Commissioners' Court on 9/26/05 and last amended on _____. I understand that my use of Communication device, IPAD or similar device provided by the County must be in accordance with this policy.

Device

Number

Signature

Date _____

2.26 POLICY ON FUEL

1. Walker County will use several methods to purchase fuel including bulk purchases to be stored at road and bridge precincts, purchases at retail establishments, or fuel purchased from other governmental agencies through inter local contracts. Department heads with approval of Commissioners' Court will establish appropriate guidelines for purchase of fuel.

2. Fuel provided by Walker County may not be used for personal reasons and all purchases must meet the statutory requirement of use for county purposes.

3. Accounting for Bulk Fuel Use. It will be the responsibility of the department head with a bulk fuel storage to account for all fuel usage from the bulk storage tank. Each department shall work with the County Auditor's Office in developing a reporting system to account for the fuel and file a monthly report with the County Auditor's Office. The reporting system should include at a minimum that:

- a. each use of fuel shall indicate in what vehicle/equipment the fuel was used, date of use, gallons, miles/hours on the vehicle/equipment at the time of fill-up and the signature of the employee getting the fuel;
- b. a summary report at the end of the month identifying total gallons used by vehicle/equipment beginning miles/hours, ending miles/hours and total miles/hours the equipment was used, average gallons per mile/hour;
- c. a reconciliation of beginning fuel, purchases of fuel, uses of fuel and ending inventory; and
- d. a method of accounting for other departments using fuel from the storage tank so that the appropriate department may be charged for the fuel reconciliation of beginning fuel, purchases of fuel, uses of fuel and ending inventory.

4. Fuel for Constables. Salaries of Constables *include* a fuel allowance. In addition, a line item may be established in each Constables' budget during the budget process. Fuel may be obtained at one of the Road and Bridge precinct bulk storage tanks or through the inter local agreement and charged against the line item up to the budgeted amount. If the fuel obtained from the Road and Bridge precincts or thru the inter local agreements exceeds the budget amount, the Constable is to reimburse the County within 10 days of receiving the bill from the County.

5. Fuel for Justices of the Peace. Salaries of Justices of the Peace *include* a fuel allowance. In addition, a Justice of the Peace may receive a vehicle allowance at a rate determined by the Commissioners' Court.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 9/26/05 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 10/15/07 Amended 12/10/07 Amended 12/8/08
Amended 9/9/13

2.27 POLICY ON MOTOR VEHICLE RECORDS

PURPOSE

1. All employees that drive or operate a county owned vehicle/equipment or drive their personal vehicle for county business are subject to motor vehicle record (MVR) checks.

2. MVRs will be examined prior to the start of employment and may be checked annually thereafter. Any job offer made to an applicant or employee for a position with driving duties shall be contingent upon an MVR check and continued employment in a position with driving duties also requires the employee to be insurable.

3. All MVR checks for applicants and employees will be conducted by Human Resources.

DEFINITION

4. MVR (Motor Vehicle Record) or Driver Record means a record that pertains to a motor vehicle operator or driver license or permit, or identification document issued by the DPS (Texas Department of Public Safety).

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/8/06 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 8/9/10 Amended 6/1/15

2.28 POLICY ON VEHICLE SAFETY AND SEAT BELT USE

PURPOSE

1. Following safe practices is extremely important. Drivers shall follow safe driving practices, and obey all applicable traffic laws and regulations. Among other things, Walker County employees are required to wear seat belts while driving or riding in any vehicle in the course and scope of their employment except for machine equipment without a rollover protective structure or Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act exceptions. Because seat belts are the best protection against injury or death in a crash, a Walker County seat belt use policy is extremely important. The simple act of buckling up reduces the chance of serious injury or death by 40% - 60% and can save money for Walker County.

POLICY

2. Walker County recognizes that seat belts are extremely effective in preventing injuries and loss of life. We care about our employees, and want to make sure that no one is injured or killed in a tragedy that could have been prevented by the use of a seat belt. Therefore, it will be Walker County's policy that both drivers and passengers while traveling on official county business shall always use seat belts except for machine equipment without a rollover protective structure or Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act exceptions. Employees are strongly encouraged to use their seat belts off the job as well. The purpose of this policy is to establish mandatory belt use as an organizational priority and designate responsibility for implementation and enforcement. While driving in the course and scope of your employment with Walker County, it is also extremely important to keep a proper lookout, and to pay attention to your environment. As a consequence, employees are strictly prohibited from typing, sending, reading or otherwise engaging in form of electronic communications while driving.

Walker County strongly discourages employees from using cell phone while operating a vehicle during working hours. Employees should plan calls either prior to traveling or while on rest breaks.

Walker County prohibits all employees from texting while operating any county owned vehicle. Employees who are driving their own personal vehicle are also prohibited from texting while driving on county business. Federal law prohibits any CDL driver operating any vehicle over 10,000GWR from texting with fines and penalties, up to and including loss of CDL.

APPLICATION

3. This policy applies to all employees and occupants of any vehicle driven by employees, including rentals and personal vehicles when used on official county business.

RESPONSIBILITY

4. Elected officials and department heads must demonstrate their commitment to this policy by communicating effectiveness and taking disciplinary action against violations.

MAINTENANCE

5. Seat belts in all county vehicles are to be maintained so they are clean and in good working order.

EDUCATION

6. Elected officials and department heads are encouraged to promote and provide time for employee awareness programs to explain the benefits of seat belts both on and off the job.

ENFORCEMENT

7. Refraining from engaging in electronic communications, while driving and seat belt use are such common, healthy practices that the need to actively enforce these policies should be rare. However, this policy will be enforced the same as other Walker County rules, and employees who violate them will be subject to disciplinary actions which may include dismissal. Elected official and department heads have an obligation to encourage and routinely monitor compliance. The driver of the vehicle is responsible for encouraging seat belt use by all occupants.

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POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/22/06 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 6/1/15

2.29 POLICY ON UNIFORMS

PURPOSE

1. It is the policy of Walker County to provide uniforms for employees upon determination by the Commissioners' Court that there are requirements related to job responsibilities of the employee that make it appropriate that the employee not wear 'street' clothes. Uniforms are defined as shirts, slacks, jeans, caps (not hats), and jackets appropriate for the department. Footwear is not provided by the County.

IRS TAXABLE FRINGE BENEFIT

2. Walker County will comply with IRS regulations in determining if the benefit is taxable to the employee.

UNIFORMITY WITHIN DEPARTMENTS

3. If all or parts of the uniforms are purchased/rented with County funds, the Elected Official/Department Head will determine the uniform appropriate for their department including shirt style, pant style, jacket style, footwear, and headwear. The Elected Official/Department Head shall require consistency of uniforms.

COUNTY/DEPARTMENT IDENTIFICATION

4. Uniform shirts, caps, jackets *shall* clearly identify the name of the County and the Department. Including the employee's name will be at the option of the Elected Official/Department Head.

ROAD AND BRIDGE EMPLOYEES

5. Road and Bridge employees not normally assigned to office duties will be provided with uniforms. Shirts, caps, or jackets shall clearly identify the County and Precinct. The Precinct Commissioner will determine the appropriate style of shirt and footwear. If uniforms are not rented, the uniforms become the property of the employee and the employee is responsible for washing and care of the uniforms. Uniforms will be replaced as determined by the Commissioner.

ELECTED LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS

6. Walker County will provide Elected Law Enforcement Officials with uniforms and utilitarian gear including specialty equipment, reflective traffic coats, and rain gear so that the law enforcement officer will be readily identifiable.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND EMERGENCY PERSONNEL

7. Walker County will provide certified law enforcement and emergency personnel with shirts, slacks, jackets, and caps at the discretion of the Elected Official/Department Head, so that officers will be readily identifiable. *Uniform slacks* may be provided at the discretion of the Department Head. Caps, shirts, and jackets shall have clear markings to identify the individual as law enforcement/emergency personnel. Departmental police may supplement this policy upon approval of the Commissioners' Court.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE/JANITORIAL

8. Walker County Building Maintenance employees will be provided with uniforms. Shirts, caps, or jackets shall clearly identify the County and Department. Commissioners' Court will determine the appropriate style of uniform and what markings/logos are to be on the shirts. If uniforms are not rented, the uniforms become the property of the employee and the employee is responsible for washing and care of the uniforms. Uniforms will be replaced as needed by the County. The County will provide the janitorial staff with smocks or t-shirts that clearly identify the employee as a County employee. Smocks and t-shirts will remain the property of Walker County. Janitorial staff is to wear the smock or t-shirt at all times while on the job.

LOGOS

9. If a Department Head requires/approves employees wearing standard style shirts *for job related reasons*, costs of placing logos on employee shirts will be at the cost of the County and/or grant.

TERMINATION

10. Any uniform or utilitarian gear purchased by Walker County shall be turned in at the time of retirement and/or separation.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: Adopted 9/25/06 Amended 1/08/07 Amended 2/26/07 Amended 6/1/15 Amended 10/11/16

2.30 POLICY ON THE WHISTLEBLOWER ACT

1. Walker County prohibits retaliation against an employee who in good faith reports a violation of law by the County or by another public employee to the appropriate law enforcement authority. An appropriate law enforcement authority is a part of a state or local governmental entity or of the federal government that the employee in good faith believes is authorized to regulate under or enforce the law alleged to be violated in the report, investigate or prosecute a violation of criminal law.
2. Elected officials, department heads and supervisors or any other employee is prohibited from taking adverse employment action against an employee who, in good faith, reports an alleged violation of law to an appropriate law enforcement authority. An employee shall be not impeded in any manner from filing a Whistleblower suit or be subjected to retaliation for filing such a suit.
3. An employee who, in good faith, believes he or she is being subjected to retaliation based on a report of alleged wrongdoing under this Policy should immediately contact the County Judge or Human Resources.
4. An employee found to be in violation of this Policy or intentionally makes a false report of wrong doing shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
5. Nothing in this Policy prevents the County from taking adverse personnel or disciplinary action against an employee based on information, observation, or evidence not related to the fact the employee reported a violation of law by the County or another public employee to an appropriate law enforcement authority.
6. Human Resources shall be responsible for posting signs in common use areas throughout the County informing employees of their rights under the Texas Whistleblower Act.
7. An employee with a question regarding this Policy should contact Human Resources.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 6/1/15

2.31 POLICY ON WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

1. Walker County is committed to providing a workplace free of violence. Walker County will not tolerate or condone violence of any kind in the workplace. The County will also not tolerate or condone any threats of violence, direct or indirect, this includes jokes.
2. Employees must refrain from any conduct or comments that might make another employee or individual suspicious or in fear for their safety. Employees should be aware of their surroundings at all times and report any suspicious behavior from the public, former or current employees to their elected official, department head or the Sheriff's Department.
3. All threats will be taken seriously and will be investigated.
4. No employee may possess a firearm or other weapon (other than an authorized law enforcement official or an official with written authorization from a presiding District or County Judge) with or without permits in any county office and building owned or used by Walker County. This also includes county owned vehicles.
5. If an employee believes that a person is violating this policy, they should immediately report it to their elected official, department head or the Sheriff's Department.
6. An employee in violation of this policy may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 6/1/15

2.32 POLICY ON EMPLOYEE SAFETY

1. Walker County is committed to providing a safe workplace for employees.
2. Employees must adhere to the general safety standards established for all employees as well as comply with their departmental safety requirements. Safety procedures may differ at each county department. Elected officials, department heads and supervisors will provide employees with specific information pertaining to their position.
3. Failure to follow the safety standards set by the County or elected official, department head or supervisor may subject an employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
4. Employees seeing unsafe working conditions shall either take steps to correct those conditions or report the unsafe conditions to their elected official, department head or supervisor.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 6/1/15

3.01 POLICY ON GROUP HEALTH AND LIFE INSURANCE

ELIGIBILITY

1. All regular full-time employees including elected officials shall be covered under the group hospitalization, medical, and life insurance program provided by the County.
2. All regular part-time employees working an average of 30 hours per week or more will be entitled to the same benefits outlined in No. 1 above.
3. The County shall pay the premium for coverage of eligible employees.
4. Employees who leave employment or who lose their health coverage eligibility may be eligible for an extension of health insurance for themselves and their eligible dependents under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA). An employee unable to return to work following FMLA leave, if eligible, will be offered COBRA. Information on extension of benefits under COBRA is available in Human Resources and may be obtained during the normal working hours. COBRA notifications will be provided to all employees within 30 days of their hire date. All eligible employees and qualified dependents will be provided with COBRA information following their termination.

DEPENDENT COVERAGE

5. An employee eligible for coverage under the group hospitalization, medical, and life insurance program of the County may include eligible dependents under the coverage by paying 100% of the cost of their coverage.
6. If a retired employee with paid health insurance returns to work and subsequently leaves employment, the retiree shall retain County paid health insurance based on the Retirement Benefits Policy (3.02).
7. Premiums for dependents covered under this plan shall be deducted from the employee's paycheck.

BENEFITS

8. The benefits for this program shall be in accordance with the provisions of the master contract with the insurance carrier.
9. A copy of the master contract shall be kept in the County Treasurer's Office and may be reviewed by employees during normal working hours.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 09/19/05 EFFECTIVE 1/1/06 Amended 9/18/06 Revised 1/8/07 Amended 6/1/15

3.02 POLICY ON RETIREMENT BENEFITS

COUNTY RETIREMENT

1. Walker County shall participate in the Texas County & District Retirement System. An employee's/elected official's eligibility for retirement is determined by the plan document.

PROGRAM DETAILS

2. Details of eligibility for and benefits provided by the program shall be available for review at the County Treasurer's Office during normal work hours.

PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

3. The employee's/elected official's share of the retirement contribution shall be deducted from each paycheck.

HEALTH INSURANCE

4. Walker County will pay the health care premium for full-time employees/elected officials who meet ALL of the following criteria until the retiree becomes eligible for Medicare. At the time the employee/elected official who met ALL of the following criteria at retirement becomes eligible for Medicare, the County will pay the premium for a Medicare supplement policy as selected by the County:

- a. 20 consecutive years of service immediately preceding retirement from Walker County and employed (hire date) prior to October 1, 2013.
- b. Begins drawing a retirement check from TCDRS

5. Employees and elected officials employed (hire date) prior to October 1, 2013 who retire and draw a retirement annuity check from the Texas County and District Retirement System and meet one of the following criteria, may continue their coverage until the retiree becomes eligible for Medicare under the County's health insurance program for themselves and their eligible dependents by paying the total premium cost criteria:

- a. Eight years of continuous service with Walker County and are at least sixty (60) years of age.
- b. Age plus years of service equals 75.
- c. Twenty (20) non-consecutive years of service.

6. For retirees electing insurance coverage under #5, coverage under the County's group health insurance for the retiree and their eligible dependents ends when the retiree becomes eligible for Medicare. At that time the employee/elected official who met criteria at retirement as described in #5, may elect to be covered under a Medicare supplement policy selected by the County by paying their premium. The retiree must pay the health and/or dental insurance and/or Medicare supplement premium by the 10th of each month or they terminate coverage with no opportunity for reinstatement.

7. A retiree who returns to full-time employment must enroll in that employer's health plan if one is offered thus making Walker County's coverage secondary.

8. Employees retiring as of the last amended date of this Policy must pay their retiree insurance by electronic draft initiated by the County Treasurer's Office. Payment will be initiated around the 5th of each month. Prior retirees are encouraged to transition to electric draft payment by the County.

9. If a retiree's insurance payment is in the arrears 30 days, an written notice will be provided to the retiree. If payment is not received within 30 days of the notice date, the retiree's insurance shall be cancelled by the County Treasurer's Office.

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POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 6/28/98 EFFECTIVE 10/01/98 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 1/8/07 Amended 12/22/08
Amended 09/23/13 Amended 6/1/15

3.02a POLICY ON REHIRE AFTER RETIREMENT

REHIRE AFTER RETIREMENT

1. An employee, excluding an elected official, who retires from the county must have a bona fide separation in service of 180 days which is a true separation in service between Walker County and employee in which the employer/employee relationship is completely severed. This means there is not an expectation, understanding or agreement the termination is temporary or that the employee will be rehired in the future. This applies even if the employee is rehired into another position, is paid more or less, is employed in another department, works different hours or is hired as an independent contractor.

2. County employees do not have a "right" to return to work.

TEXAS COUNTY AND DISTRICT RETIREMENT SYSTEM (TCDRS) REQUIRED BREAK IN EMPLOYMENT

3. TCDRS requires a break in service of no less than one full calendar month before you rehire a retiree. (Example: If you retire February 15, you may not be eligible for rehire until April 1.) If you return any sooner TCDRS will cancel your retirement, and you will have to pay back all the retirement payments you have received.

TCDRS PAYMENTS

4. Prior to January 1, 2006, TCDRS suspends your annuity until you stop working for the employer. Once you stop working for the employer you will receive one lump sum payment for the held-back payments and your regular payments will again begin. As of January 1, 2006, TCDRS will not suspend your annuity and you may draw both TCDRS payment and a paycheck.

TCDRS IRS/COUNTY RESPONSIBILITIES

5. The IRS states that you cannot make a prior agreement, arrangement or imply to rehire an employee after he/she retires, this is considered collusion if such an agreement is reached.

6. Your employer's plan could lose its tax deferred status, and your employer would then owe both back taxes and penalties on not just one account but the entire plan.

7. If an employee's separation isn't considered bona fide, TCDRS would have to cancel your retirement and you, the employee, will have to repay all the retirement payments sent to you. If the employee is younger than 59 ½, the employee may have to pay a 10% excise tax penalty in addition to income taxes.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 1/3/06 EFFECTIVE 1/3/06 Amended 6/1/15 Amended 09/13/2021

3.03 POLICY ON SOCIAL SECURITY

PARTICIPATION

1. All employees including elected officials shall participate in the Federal Social Security Program including Medicare which provides certain retirement/disability income benefits and medical insurance.

DEDUCTIONS

2. Deductions shall be made from each employee's paycheck in accordance with the requirements of the Social Security Program.

COUNTY CONTRIBUTIONS

3. The County shall pay an amount to each employee's Social Security account in accordance with the regulations of the program.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/24/93 Amended 6/1/15

3.04 POLICY ON WORKERS' COMPENSATION

APPLICABILITY

1. All employees including elected officials are covered by the Texas Workers' Compensation Act and will receive all benefits prescribed by law. An employee's worker's compensation benefits may be adversely affected if the employee is injured while under the influence of alcohol or drugs or while the employee is engaging in horseplay.

BENEFITS

2. Premiums covering all employees are paid by the County and are based on gross wages paid.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR REPORTING ACCIDENTS

3. Any employee who suffers an on the job injury or job related illness shall notify his/her supervisor within 24 hours and fill out the appropriate reporting forms. Claim forms may be obtained in the County Treasurer's Office.

4. Failure to report job related injuries or illness within 24 hours from date of injury or illness may affect an employee's eligibility to receive workers' compensation benefits or may delay benefit payments.

PHYSICIANS RELEASE

5. Any employee who has been receiving workers' compensation benefits shall be required to provide a release from the attending physician before being allowed to return to work.

BENEFIT CONTINUATION

6. Law enforcement employees, by law, are eligible for salary continuation. For all other employees, their workers' compensation check from the Insurance Company will be paid directly to the employee and becomes the total pay for the period. Weekly benefits are established by statute and set at the date of injury or illness. Other benefits are also established by statute. Worker's compensation pays Temporary Income Benefits (TIBS) for lost time from work in excess of seven calendar days as a result of an eligible work related injury or illness. Employees may use paid leave for all workers' compensation time off less than eight days.

7. Health insurance for the employee will be funded by County for six (6) months from the date of the accident.

8. No vacation time will be accrued while on workers' compensation.

9. No sick leave will be accrued while on workers' compensation.

10. An employee wishing to maintain any dependent medical or life insurance may do so by paying the full premium, on or before the date on which it is due, for the period of disability. Health insurance will be offered under COBRA when the employee's coverage ends.

11. The employee's Texas County and District Retirement account cannot be withdrawn, unless employee terminates.

12. When Human Resources is notified of a workers' compensation injury or illness, FMLA will begin when lost time begins if the employee and event are eligible.

13. Walker County expressly and strictly prohibits any retaliation against a County employee who has been injured on the job or who files a workers' compensation claim in good faith. Any employee who believes they have been subjected to improper retaliation on the basis of an on the job injury or a workers' compensation claim should report the matter to the County in accordance with the complaint procedure set forth in Policy 2.15, Workplace Harassment.

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14. In addition, any employee who is unable to return to work following an on the job accident is subject to the County's job abandonment and absence control policy set forth in the Attendance and Timeliness Policy (2.08).

15. Eligibility for workers' compensation benefits is determined by the Texas Association of Counties (TAC), not by Walker County. Benefits are governed by State law and administrated by the TAC, not by Walker County.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 6/14/99 EFFECTIVE 6/14/99 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 6/1/15

3.05 POLICY ON MEAL PERIODS AND BREAKS

SCHEDULING MEAL PERIODS

1. The scheduling of employee meal periods shall be determined by the elected official/department head or designee to facilitate the serving of the public and permitting efficient department operations.

LENGTH OF MEAL PERIODS

2. The normal length of the meal period shall be one hour.

DUTY STATUS WHILE ON MEAL PERIODS

3. For computation of hours worked, employees shall be considered to be off duty during meal periods unless the employee's supervisor requires them to remain in an on duty status during the meal period as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act.

BREAKS FOR NURSING MOTHERS

4. Nursing mothers are allowed reasonable break time, comfort and privacy to express (pump) breast milk. Nursing mothers should notify their elected official/department head or designee of their need for this accommodation so that arrangements can be made to provide a private, comfortable location to express milk. This location must not be a bathroom and shall be shielded from view and free from intrusion. These breaks are not considered compensable working time and should be deducted from the total time worked. Employees may choose to use accrued paid leave for this purpose. Nursing mothers are entitled to this break for one year following the birth of their child. Walker County does not allow any retaliation against nursing mothers for asking for this break.

BREAKS

5. All other employee breaks are determined by each elected official/department head and are not required to be given. If a department provides employees with a break, these breaks may not be accumulated or used for time off. The Fair Labor Standards Act does not require any breaks other than for nursing mothers; however if paid breaks are provided for employees, nursing mothers must be given the same amount of paid break time.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/24/93 Amended 6/1/15

3.06 POLICY ON HOLIDAYS AND HOLIDAY LEAVE

ELIGIBILITY

1. All regular full-time employees excluding elected officials shall be eligible to receive time off with pay for each official county holiday as established annually by the Commissioners' Court. Time off will be calculated at 8 hours per day for each holiday given.

AMOUNT OF PAY

2. Regular full-time employees may take holiday leave for up to their regular scheduled number of hours per day.

HOLIDAY LEAVE

3. If a regular full-time employee's job requires him/her to work on an official holiday, the employee shall accrue holiday leave for time worked up to 8 hours. Holiday time may be accrued and used at a later date.

HOLIDAY ON DAY OFF (SHIFT WORKERS ONLY)

4. If a holiday occurs on a full-time employee's regular day off, the employee shall accrue the holiday leave.

HOLIDAYS DURING LEAVE ABSENCE OR SUSPENSION

5. An employee who is on a leave of absence or suspension without pay shall not be paid for any official holidays occurring during such leave.

MAXIMUM ACCRUAL OF HOLIDAY LEAVE

6. Maximum amount of unused Holiday Leave that an employee shall be allowed to have at any one time shall be 112 hours.

USE OF HOLIDAY LEAVE

7. If a non-law enforcement hourly employee's actual time worked plus the holiday time exceeds 40 hours in a work week, holiday leave will be adjusted to the amount needed to total forty hours and the holiday time difference will be accrued for later use. For law enforcement hourly employees, if the employee's actual time worked plus the holiday time exceeds 43 hours in a work week, holiday leave will be adjusted to the amount needed to total 43 hours and the holiday time difference will be accrued for later use.

UPON TERMINATION

8. Any balances left at the date of termination will not be compensated.

BORROWING

9. Employees shall not be able to borrow leave time against possible future accruals.

RELIGIOUS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

10. Special consideration shall be given to employees requesting time off for religious or other special observances which are not designated as paid holidays for Walker County. Each elected official and department head is responsible for granting this leave based on the needs of their departments. Vacation, comp time, holiday leave or leave without pay may be used for such purposes.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 2/14/00 EFFECTIVE 2/14/00 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 6/1/15

3.07 POLICY ON VACATION LEAVE

ELIGIBILITY

1. All regular full-time employees excluding elected officials shall be eligible for paid vacation leave.

AMOUNT

2. Vacation shall be earned in accordance with the attached Vacation Accrual Schedule.

WAITING PERIOD

3. An employee in a position eligible to earn vacation will start accruing Vacation Time three (3) months from hire date but will not be eligible to use the Vacation Time until six (6) months from hire date.

LEAVE TAKEN IN A PAY PERIOD

4. The amount of leave charged against accrued leave per work week for non-law enforcement hourly employees shall be limited to the difference between 40 hours and the actual hours worked. For law enforcement hourly personnel, the amount of leave charged against accrued leave per work week shall be limited to the difference between 43 hours and actual hours worked.

MAXIMUM ACCRUAL LIMIT

5. The maximum vacation accrual limit that a full-time employee shall be allowed to have at any one time will be based upon the number of months of service per the "*Vacation Accrual Schedule for Full-Time Employees*" attached. An employee transferring from and to a position eligible for vacation leave does not affect vacation accruals.

PAY IN LIEU OF TIME OFF

6. An employee shall not be allowed to receive pay in lieu of taking time off for vacation.

REQUESTS AND APPROVAL

7. Employees shall submit their requests for annual vacation leave to their supervisor prior to start of vacation.
8. Supervisors shall schedule the vacations of their employees with considerations being given to seniority, operating needs of the department, and employee requests.

BORROWING VACATION

9. Employees shall not be allowed to borrow vacation against possible future vacation earning.

HOLIDAY DURING VACATION

10. If a holiday falls during the period an employee is on vacation, the holiday shall be handled in accordance with the provisions of the *Policy 3.06, Holidays and Holiday Leave* and will not be charged against the employee's vacation balance.

ILLNESS DURING VACATION

11. If an employee becomes ill while taking vacation leave, the period of illness may be charged against the employee's sick leave balance and not vacation if:
 - a. The employee promptly notifies his/her supervisor of the illness;
 - b. The employee provides the supervisor with acceptable proof of the illness (see Section 3.08); and
 - c. The supervisor gives permission to charge the period of illness to sick leave.

VACATION PAY AT TERMINATION

12. Employees who have been employed for twelve (12) months in a position which earns vacation shall be paid up to the number of hours per the *Maximum Accrual for Payment upon Termination Schedule* for all unused vacation at their present rate.

MAXIMUM AVAILABLE VACATION

13. The maximum amount of vacation an employee shall have available for use at any given time is the amount of unused vacation the employee had at the end of the previous pay period up to the maximum accrual allowed.

BRIDGING

14. An individual who is re-hired by the County within 730 days after employment has been terminated shall have prior qualifying service with the County counted toward months of service for calculating the waiting period and the rate of vacation accrual. A full-time employee who moves to part-time and then returns to full-time within 730 days shall have prior qualifying service with the County counted toward months of service for calculating the waiting period and rate of vacation accrual.

RECORD KEEPING

15. Payroll shall maintain on a bi-weekly basis a vacation record update for each employee which shows:

- a. The vacation balance at the start of the pay period;
- b. The hours of vacation earned during the pay period;
- c. The hours of vacation used during the pay period; and
- d. The vacation balance at the end of the pay period.

Each pay period the employee will be given an attendance detail report which shows all available leave balances.

16. The "Employee Attendance Detail" report may be obtained from Payroll in the County Treasurer's Office.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 6/1/99 EFFECTIVE 6/1/99 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 1/19/10 Amended 6/1/15
Amended 05/28/19 Amended 09/13/2021

**VACATION ACCRUAL SCHEDULE
FULL-TIME REGULAR EMPLOYEES**

<u>Months of Service</u>	<u>Accrued Hours/Pay Period</u>	<u>Accrued Hours/Year</u>	<u>Max Accruals</u>
0-03 months	0.00		
04-48 months	3.08	80	160
49-108 months	3.69	96	192
109-180 months	4.62	120	240
181-192 months	4.92	128	256
193-204 months	5.23	136	272
205-216 months	5.54	144	288
217-228 months	5.85	152	304
229+ months	6.15	160	320

MAXIMUM ACCRUAL FOR PAYMENT UPON TERMINATION SCHEDULE

<u>Months of Service</u>	<u>Max Accruals for Payment upon Termination</u>
01-48 months	160
49-108 months	192
109-180 months	240
181-192 months	256
193-204 months	272
205-216 months	288
217-228 months	304
229+ months	320

3.08 POLICY ON SICK LEAVE

ELIGIBILITY

1. All regular full-time employees excluding elected officials shall be eligible for paid sick leave.

AMOUNT

2. Regular full-time employees shall earn sick leave at a rate of 96 hours a year – 3.68 per pay period.

ACCUMULATION

3. Any unused sick leave at the end of the calendar year shall be carried over into the next calendar year up to the maximum accrual amount.

MAXIMUM ACCRUAL

4. The maximum amount of unused sick leave that a full-time employee shall be allowed to have at any one time shall be 480 hours, which is equivalent to sixty (60) working days.

TYPES OF USAGE

5. Eligible employees may use accrued sick leave for absence from work due to:
 - a. Personal illness or injury;
 - b. Medical, dental, optical examinations, or treatment and appointments with other qualified medical professionals;
 - c. Medical quarantine resulting from exposure to a contagious disease; or
 - d. Illness of a member of the employee's family who requires the employee's personal care and attention.
 - e. Sick leave may be used for death of a family member which is defined as the employee's spouse, employee or spouse's children, parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents and grandchildren which is consistent with the Policy 3.13, Emergency Leave. The number of hours shall be limited to 40 hours per death in the employee's family as defined above.

The use of sick leave for the death of a family member does not limit an employee using available emergency leave.

Employees shall write on their timesheet that sick leave was used for death of a family member.

- f. Sick leave may not be used as vacation or any other reason not addressed in this policy.

NOTIFICATION OF SICK LEAVE

6. An employee shall be responsible for notifying his/her supervisor as early as is practical on the first day of sick leave absence and request that approved sick leave be granted.
7. If more than one day of sick leave is needed, the employee shall be responsible for notifying his/her supervisor of the expected length of the absence on the first day of sick leave or shall be required to notify his/her supervisor on a daily basis for each day he/she is unable to come to work. The employee will be placed on FMLA if the event and employee are eligible.
8. An employee shall be required to request prior approval from his/her supervisor for sick leave to be used for non-emergency medical, dental, optical and other appointments with qualified medical professionals.

DOCUMENTATION

9. An employee's supervisor may request acceptable documentation of an employee's illness or injury where it is deemed necessary for approval of a sick leave request.

BORROWING

10. Employees shall not be allowed to borrow sick leave against possible future accruals.

MAXIMUM AVAILABLE

11. The maximum amount of sick leave that an employee will have available at any given time is the unused balance at the end of the preceding pay period not to exceed the maximum accrual allowed.

WAITING PERIOD

12. Sick leave shall be earned but not used for the first three months of employment. The waiting period does not apply to transfers from positions that are eligible for sick leave benefits.

PAY AT TERMINATION

13. After eight (8) or more years of continuous full-time employment with Walker County, in a position which earns sick leave, an employee shall be paid for one-half of accumulated documented sick leave, up to a maximum of one-half of sixty (60) working days, at present rate of pay, upon leaving County employment.

BRIDGING

14. An employee who is rehired by the County within 730 days after employment has been terminated shall have prior qualifying service with the County counted for calculating the sick leave waiting period. A full-time employee who moves to part-time and then returns to full-time within 730 days shall have prior qualifying service with the County counted toward years of service for calculating the sick leave waiting period.

RECORD KEEPING

15 Payroll shall maintain and update on a per pay period basis, a sick leave record for each employee which shows:

- a. The sick leave balance at the start of the pay period;
- b. The hours of sick leave used during the pay period; and
- c. The sick leave balance at the end of the pay period.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/1/95 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 2/23/09 Amended 6/1/15
Amended 06/18/2018

3.09 POLICY ON CIVIL LEAVE

JURY DUTY

1. Regular full-time and regular part-time employees shall receive their normal pay based on their scheduled work hours for jury duty. This includes both the jury selection process and, if selected, the time the employee actually spends serving on the jury.
2. An employee receiving pay from the County while on jury duty leave is entitled to all fees received as a juror for the County.

OFFICIAL COURT ATTENDANCE

3. All regular employees subpoenaed or who have a court order to attend court to appear as a witness or to testify in some official capacity involving Walker County shall be entitled to leave with pay for the time his/her court attendance is required, provided proper documentation is attached to the timesheet.
4. Any fee paid for such service may be retained by the employee.

PRIVATE LITIGATION

5. If an employee is absent from work to appear in private litigation, the time off shall be charged to vacation leave, comp time leave, holiday leave or leave without pay.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 8/12/96 AMENDED 7/19/04 Amended 6/1/15

3.10 POLICY ON MILITARY AND/OR FIRE TRAINING LEAVE AND/OR FIRST RESPONDERS

GUARD AND RESERVE

1. Regular employees who are members of the National Guard or member of reserve components of the United States Armed Forces shall be allowed up to fifteen (15) workdays off per federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30) with pay to attend authorized training sessions and exercises.
2. The fifteen (15) workdays paid military leave shall apply to the federal fiscal year and any unused balance at the end of the year shall not be carried forward into the next year.
3. Pay for attendance at Reserve or National Guard training sessions or exercises shall be authorized only for periods which fall within the employee's normal work schedule.
4. An employee may use annual vacation, comp time or holiday leave or leave without pay if he/she must attend Reserve or National Guard training sessions or exercises in excess of the fifteen (15) workdays paid maximum.

ORDERS

5. An employee going on military leave shall provide his/her supervisor with a set of orders within two (2) business days after receiving them.

ACTIVE MILITARY SERVICE

6. Employees who leave their positions as a result of being called to active military service or who voluntarily enter the Armed Forces of the United States shall be eligible for re-employment in accordance with the state and federal regulations in effect at the time of their release from active duty.

FIREFIGHTER/ARSON TRAINING

7. Regular full-time employees who are members of a Fire Department or Volunteer Fire Department shall be allowed up to 40 hours per year with pay to attend authorized firefighter or arson training sessions and/or exercises.
8. The 40 hour paid fire training leave shall apply to the calendar year and any unused balance at the end of the year shall not be carried forward into the next year.
9. Pay for attendance at firefighter/arson training sessions or exercises shall be authorized only for periods which fall within the employee's normal work schedule.
10. An employee may use vacation, comp time or holiday leave or leave without pay if he/she must attend firefighter/arson training sessions or exercises in excess of the 40 hours paid maximum.

FIRST RESPONDERS

11. Regular full-time Walker County employees who are trained First Responders to include but not limited to CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) members, Fire Department Auxiliary members, or Volunteer Fire Department members may be allowed to participate in exercises, training and real world events during business hours.
12. Exercises and trainings are scheduled in advance.
13. With department head approval an employee may participate during business hours.
14. Employees will be compensated at their regular rate of pay for activities that occur during the employee's normal work hours.

15. Any employee events that occur outside the employee's normal work hours shall not be compensated.

16. Expenses will not be reimbursed.

COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

17. An employee going on firefighter training leave shall provide his/her supervisor with written approval from the fire chief of the department that he/she is affiliated with before attending the training and a completion certificate signed by the training officer within 3 days after receiving the certificate. This shall also apply to CERT members who receive a certificate for service during an event. A copy of the certificate or agenda shall accompany the employee's next timesheet, reflecting the training and completion of the course. If a certificate or agenda does not accompany the timesheet then vacation, comp time or holiday leave or leave without pay will be used instead of fire training leave.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 2/28/00 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 6/26/17

3.11 POLICY ON FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE AND MILITARY FAMILY LEAVE

PURPOSE

1. All eligible employees of Walker County are entitled to the protection offered by The Family and Medical Leave Act as amended in 2009 and 2013 to provide eligible employees with unpaid leave. There are two types of leave available, including the basic 12-week leave entitlement (Family Medical Leave), as well as the military family leave entitlements (Military Family Leave). The County calculates Family Medical Leave (FML) and Military Family Leave (MFL) on a rolling 12-month basis, as opposed to a calendar year basis.

ELIGIBILITY

2. In order to be eligible for family leave, the employee must have been employed by Walker County for at least twelve (12) months in the past 7 years and worked at least 1,250 hours for the County during the twelve (12) months immediately preceding the date of FML or MFL. FML and MFL provisions apply equally to male and female employees. Supervisors and employees with questions about FML and MFL leave and eligibility should contact Human Resources for more information.

USE AND SCHEDULING

3. Any qualified leave will first be charged to accrued sick, vacation, overtime, holiday or emergency leave balances (if eligible to use) and then, when this leave has been exhausted, the leave will be unpaid. FML and MFL run concurrently with all substituted paid leave, including worker's compensation.

In the case of leave for a serious medical condition, if the leave is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment, employees are required to make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment so as not to disrupt unduly the operations of the employer, and also are required to provide thirty (30) days advance notice or, if the treatment is in less than thirty (30) days, such notice as practicable.

FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE (FML)

4. The most common serious health conditions that qualify for FML are: a) conditions requiring an overnight stay in a hospital or other medical care facility; b) conditions that incapacitate an employee or family member for more than three days and ongoing medical treatment (either multiple appointments with a health care provider, or a single appointment and follow up care such as prescription medication; c) chronic conditions that cause occasional periods when the employee or family member is incapacitated and requires treatment by a health care provider at least twice a year; and d). pregnancy (including prenatal medical appointments, incapacity due to morning sickness and medically required bed rest).

Employees who meet the FML eligibility requirements described in this policy are eligible to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for one of the following reasons: a) to care for the employee's child during the first 12 months following birth; b) to care for a child during the first 12 months following placement with the employee for adoption or foster care; c) to care for a spouse or child (under the age of 18 or if over 18 incapable of self-care due to a disability), or parent ("covered relation") with a serious health condition; d) for incapacity due to the employee's pregnancy, prenatal medical or child birth; or e) because of the employee's own serious health condition that renders the employee unable to perform an essential function of his or her position.

MILITARY FAMILY LEAVE (MFL)

5. Under the Military Family Leave, there are two types of leave available: a qualifying exigency leave and leave to care for a covered service member.

Qualifying Exigency Leave

Employees meeting the eligibility requirements described in this policy may be entitled to use up to 12 weeks of their MFL entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Leave may be used if the employee's spouse or child in the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserves or National Guard) is on active duty or called to active duty status in a foreign country. Qualifying exigencies may include: a. short-notice deployment (up to 7 days of leave); b. attending certain military events or related activities; c. arranging for alternative childcare; d. addressing certain financial and legal arrangements; e. periods of rest and recuperation for the covered military member (up to five days of leave); f. attending certain counseling sessions; g. attending post-deployment activities (available for up to 90 days after the termination of the covered military member's active duty status); h. attending family support or assistance programs and informational briefings; i. to act as the covered military member's representative before a governmental agency; j. to address issues that arise from the death of a covered military member while on active duty status in a foreign country; k. other activities arising out of the covered military member's active duty or call to active duty in a foreign country and agreed upon by the County and the employee.

Military Caregiver Leave

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

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

An eligible employee may take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a veteran (Regular, Reserve, or National Guard) who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness and who was a member of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve or National Guard) at any time during the five year period preceding the date on which the veteran undergoes that medical treatment, recuperation or therapy. This leave entitlement is applied on a per-injury basis such that an eligible employee may be entitled to take more than one period of 26 workweeks of leave if the leave is to care for different covered service members or covered veteran with a subsequent serious illness or injury, except that no more than 26 workweeks may be taken within any single 12 month period.

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

LEAVE TAKEN ON INTERMITTENT OR REDUCED BASIS

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

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

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

REQUEST OF MARRIED EMPLOYEES

7. If two eligible employees are married and both work for Walker County, each employee together may take a combine total of 12 week's leave during any 12 month period for medical reasons, unless it is the employee's own serious health condition.

CERTIFICATION OF FML OR MFL

8. Requests for FML or MFL leave should be submitted to the employee's supervisor. When submitting a request for leave, the employee must provide sufficient information for the County to determine if the leave might qualify and also provide information on the anticipated date when the leave would start as well as the duration of the leave. Supervisors shall notify Human Resources immediately of the request for such leave.

Employees do not have to specifically request FML or MFL. When the County has sufficient information that an employee's leave is FML or MFL protected, the employee will be notified of the designation.

Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions; that a family member is unable to perform daily activities; that the employee or family member needs hospitalization or continuing treatment by a healthcare provider; or the circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the County if the requested leave is for a reason for which such leave was previously taken or certified.

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

If the employee is requesting leave because of the employee's own or a covered relation's serious health condition, the employee and the relevant healthcare provider must supply appropriate medical certification. When the employee requests leave, the County will notify the employee of the requirement for medical certification and when it is due (no more than 15 days after the employee requests leave).

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

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

If an employee takes leave because of the employee's own serious health condition or to care for a covered relation, the employee maybe required to provide the County updated documentation of the condition every 30 days, and his or her intention to return to work. In addition, the employee must give notice as soon as practicable (within 2 business days, if feasible) if the dates of the leave change, are extended, or were unknown initially.

RETENTION OF JOB

9. An employee who has been on a leave covered under this policy shall be returned either to the same position held immediately prior to the leave or to a position equivalent in pay, benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment. An eligible employee is not guaranteed their actual job held prior to leave under this policy.

CONTINUATION OF INSURANCE

10. The County shall continue to pay the group health premiums for the employee's coverage for an employee who is on family medical leave. The employee must submit payment for any dependent or optional coverage; failure to do so may result in loss of coverage. If the employee does not return to work following the family medical leave, he/she will be required to reimburse the County for the group health premiums paid on his/her behalf during the leave period unless the failure to return was because of the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition, either his/her own or a family member's, or other circumstances beyond his/her control.

REINSTATEMENT

11. Upon returning to work after leave that was based on his/her own serious health condition, the County shall require each employee to provide certification from his/her health care provider stating that the employee is capable of assuming his/her full work duties without affecting the normal safety and well-being of the employee, other staff members, or any other persons.

BENEFITS ACCRUAL

12. Employees do not accrue paid leave while on unpaid status nor do they earn credited service time in the Texas County and District Retirement System for any month in which all leave is unpaid.

ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

13. Any areas of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 and any amendments not specifically addressed in this policy shall be administered in accordance with the legal requirements of the Act, a copy of which is available in Human Resources.

14. Also see Policy 3.04, Workers' Compensation.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 11/13/95 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 5/10/10 Amended 6/1/15

3.12 POLICY ON LEAVE WITHOUT PAY FOR PERSONAL REASONS

PERSONAL REASONS DEFINITION

1. Reasons not covered under the Family Medical Leave and Military Family Leave Policy, 3.11.

MAXIMUM

2. Each elected official/department head shall have the authority to grant an employee short term personal leave without pay not to exceed ten (10) workdays per calendar year. Short term leave can be taken in increments of hours or days. If a reason exists for personal leave beyond ten (10) workdays, the department head may grant long term leave up to forty-five (45) consecutive workdays per calendar year. Total leave without pay for personal reasons may not exceed forty-five (45) workdays per calendar year, provided that no hardship will be created by leaving the employee's position unfilled for the period of the requested leave.

PART-TIME REPLACEMENTS

3. Part-time employees to fill in during this time may be requested of Commissioners' Court.

USE OF PAID LEAVE

4. Leave without pay for personal reasons shall only be granted after all available vacation, comp time, and holiday leave are used.

BENEFITS DURING PERSONAL LEAVE COVER 10 CONSECUTIVE WORKDAYS

5. An employee on personal leave without pay for over ten (10) consecutive workdays shall not accrue vacation time, sick leave, or holiday leave during the period of leave without pay.
6. An employee on personal leave without pay for over ten (10) consecutive workdays may continue medical, dental, and life insurance coverage on him/herself and, if applicable, coverage on eligible dependents by paying the premiums for such coverage on or before the due date set by the County.

REVOCATION OF LEAVE WITHOUT PAY

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

RETURN TO WORK AFTER LEAVE WITHOUT PAY

8. Upon returning to work after an authorized leave of absence for over ten (10) consecutive workdays without pay, an employee receives an adjusted employment date and adjusted anniversary date which reflect the period of time that the employee used for leave of absence. This adjusted date will be used for the purpose of calculating vacation leave accrual and any other benefits that may be based on longevity.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 6/24/96 Amended 6/1/15

3.13 POLICY ON EMERGENCY LEAVE

ELIGIBILITY

1. All regular full-time employees shall be eligible for emergency leave.

TYPES OF USAGE

2. Eligible employees may use emergency leave in the event of serious illness or death of a member of the immediate family of an employee. Immediate family shall be defined as: spouse, employee or spouse's children, parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, and grandchildren.
3. An emergency leave request signed by the employee and the elected official/department head shall be attached to the employee's time sheet. Payroll will use other eligible leave if it is determined the reason does not qualify for emergency leave. For additional leave due to death of a family member, sick leave may be used in accordance with Policy 3.08, Sick Leave.

AMOUNT

4. Regular full time employees shall be credited 24 hours on January 1 of each succeeding year and shall be able to take no more than the credited amount during that calendar year.
5. Absences due to serious illness of a family member or death in excess of credited amounts shall be charged to Sick, Vacation, Holiday, Comp Time or Leave Without Pay.

CLOSING COUNTY OFFICES

6. Elected officials/department heads have full discretionary authority to close their respective offices to allow employees to attend funerals of county employees, officials of Walker County, and spouses or relatives of county employees.

DURATION

7. Length of the office closing will be the appropriate amount of time to allow travel to and from funeral service and/or cemetery.

INDIVIDUAL LEAVE

8. Individual employees requesting time off to attend funerals of people, who are not relatives as provided by the Personnel Policy Manual, must receive approval from their respective elected official, department head or supervisor. Duration of time is the same as in paragraph 7 above.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 1/27/97 Amended 9/25/06 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 6/1/15

3.14 POLICY ON LONGEVITY

ELIGIBILITY

1. All regular full-time employees employed October 1st shall be eligible to receive longevity pay after completing 5 or more years of full-time service. Employees and officials not eligible:

- a. Part-time employees (working less than 40 hours per week)
- b. Employees fully or partially funded by grants where longevity benefits are not recognized as allowable costs to the grant.

AMOUNT

2. Longevity pay will be calculated based on the number of full-time years of service completed as of October 1st each year. The longevity pay rate is \$170 a year.

BRIDGING

3. An employee who is rehired by the County within 730 days after employment has been terminated shall have prior qualifying service with the County counted toward years of full-time service for calculating longevity pay. An employee who has full-time service who moves to part-time and then returns to full-time within 730 days shall have prior qualifying service with the County counted toward years of service for calculating longevity service.

NO MODIFICATION OF AT-WILL STATUS

4. An employee's qualification for longevity pay shall not alter the employee's status as an at-will employee.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 11/8/99 Amended 12/8/08 Amended 8/13/12 Amended 11/7/12 Amended 6/1/15 Amended 8/08/22

3.15 POLICY ON EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

EMERGENCY CLOSING

1. At times, emergencies such as severe weather, power failures, and general health and safety concerns for county employees may arise. In extreme cases these circumstances may require the closing of a work facility by an elected official or the County Judge, or County Judge Pro-Tem for departments not headed by elected officials. During non-working hours, local radio stations may be asked to broadcast notification of closing. When operations are closed due to emergency conditions, the time off from scheduled work may be paid. Certain offices such as the County Sheriff's Office and Jail, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Public Safety Communications Center, Road & Bridge Departments, and Emergency Management Offices are expected to remain open during emergency situations. Each elected official and department head is responsible for designating their own employees and providing information to personnel designated as essential during emergency closings. Public safety shall be foremost in the development of departmental emergency action plans.

ELIGIBILITY

2. This policy applies only to regular full-time employees.

OFFICES STAYING OPEN DURING EMERGENCY CLOSING

3. Regular full-time employees that are required to work during emergency conditions will be granted the same number of hours worked not to exceed 12 hours per day. This leave can be taken off at another time.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 7/9/01 Amended 5/10/10 Amended 6/1/15

3.16 POLICY ON VEHICLE ACQUISITION, ASSIGNMENT AND USE

DEFINITION

1. A county vehicle is defined as a vehicle owned, leased or rented by Walker County and includes vehicles awarded to Walker County. For purposes of this policy, the term employee includes elected and appointed officials.

ACQUISITION

2. All fleet acquisitions are coordinated through the Purchasing Department of Walker County.

ASSIGNMENT

3. County vehicles shall be assigned to departments, individual employees, or a general vehicle pool on the basis of work responsibility. Vehicles may be assigned to employees, either solely for use during normal working hours or as a take home vehicle when deemed appropriate. The decision to assign a vehicle to an employee shall be based upon efficient and effective service delivery provided by the employee assigned to the vehicle and an overall county services delivery.

4. The Sheriff's Department, Constables and Departments that employ certified law enforcement officers (Planning & Development, Criminal District Attorney, etc.) may adopt departmental policies that supplement this policy. The policies must conform to requirements that allow for the proper IRS reporting of take home vehicles. After acknowledgement of the policies by formal action of the Commissioners' Court, the departmental policies must be on file in the County Judge's Office and Payroll.

5. Vehicle assignments to departments shall be established by Commissioners' Court.

6. Vehicle assignments to individuals will be approved by elected officials/department heads and reviewed as necessary. Before a vehicle is assigned as a take-home vehicle, it MUST be on the approval list adopted by Commissioners' Court and on file in the County Judge's Office and Payroll. Assignment shall be in accordance with the following criteria:

- a. Agreement between the employee and the employer either prior to, or after, employment. This agreement should be documented and placed in the employee's personnel file in Human Resources.
- b. The vehicle is equipped with tools and/or instrumentation that are essential in an emergency response situation. The employee responds directly to the scene of an emergency and is trained to use the tools and equipment.
- c. The employee's responsibilities requires that he/she perform certain job functions on a regular basis during off-hours, and the documented miles traveled per year (during off-hours) between home and job destination justify the decision. This documentation must be turned in with employee's timesheet to Payroll.
- d. The employee must reside in Walker County or adjoining counties.

7. Employees may be allowed to occasionally take a county vehicle home when it is determined to be in the best interest of the County to do so. "Occasionally" is defined as occurring on an infrequent and irregular basis, and less than twelve working days in a year. This permission is granted by the elected official or department head.

VEHICLE USE

8. Employees shall be responsible for the proper use and maintenance of all vehicles in their care, custody and control.

DRIVER'S LICENSE/INSURABILITY

9. Employees who operate county vehicles or equipment for county business shall have a valid State of Texas driver's license necessary for that vehicle or equipment and be insurable. A copy of the employee's current driver's license and personal insurance card must be submitted annually with timesheets and shall be maintained in Human Resources.

10. An employee who is required to have a driver's license to operate county vehicles or equipment shall immediately notify his/her supervisor of any change in the status of that license. An employee whose job involves operation of a vehicle or equipment requiring a license for legal operation shall be subject to possible job change, demotion or termination if their license is suspended or revoked.

11. An employee whose job involves operation of a vehicle or equipment requiring a license for its operation but who is deemed uninsurable by the County's vehicle liability carrier even though the employee's license has not been suspended or revoked, shall be subject to possible job change, demotion or termination.

12. Any employee operating county vehicles or equipment shall report all accidents and property damage to his/her supervisor immediately. Elected officials/department heads shall report all accidents and property damage to the proper law enforcement authority immediately. Copies of all accident and incident reports completed by the employee shall be sent to the supervisor of the employee, to the County Judge and to the Purchasing Agent within 24 hours. All County employees in County vehicles shall submit to a drug and alcohol test in accordance with Policy 2.14, Drug and Alcohol Policy.

13. All operators of, and passengers in, county vehicles shall use the vehicle seat and lap belts if the vehicle is so equipped. Airbags shall not be rendered inoperable on vehicles so equipped. Exceptions to wearing a vehicle seat belt apply if the machine does not have a Rollover Protective Structure or for an individual who qualifies for an Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act exception.

14. County vehicles shall not be altered in any way without obtaining written approval from the appropriate elected official/department head. No county vehicles will have any stickers, posters, signs, or any other similar attachment placed on or affixed to them unless previous approval or directive has been issued by Commissioners' Court.

15. County vehicles are to be used as necessary to conduct business of the County and its operations. Employees will not operate county vehicles for the purpose of conducting a private business or enterprise or any other personal use. It is, however, recognized that a minimum amount of personal use of a county vehicle may be required for those employees who:

- a. Are assigned a take-home vehicle and therefore, commute to and from work in the vehicle.
- b. Conduct their daily work in and from a vehicle.
- c. Are on county authorized travel.
- d. Minimum personal use shall be allowed and limited to activities such as:
 1. Commuting to and from work
 2. Driving to and from a restaurant during approved meal breaks
 3. Personal emergencies

DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

16. Employees shall not have in their possession in a county vehicle a controlled substance except for law enforcement personnel as a part of their duties or medically authorized prescriptions in an authorized labelled container.

Employees shall not purchase or transport alcoholic beverages in a county vehicle for any reason other than law enforcement authorized duties.

Evidence and contraband may not be stored in a county vehicle beyond an employee's assigned duties hours for their shift.

Employees may not use tobacco products while in a county vehicle at any time.

TAXABLE BENEFIT

17. Use of a take home county vehicle may be a taxable benefit to the employee. A copy of a take home vehicle assignment shall be forwarded to Payroll. If it is determined that IRS regulations require the reporting of a taxable benefit, the Department Head/Elected Official is responsible to report use of a take home vehicle in a format determined by Payroll and County Auditor and approved by Commissioners' Court.

18. See also Policy 2.28, Walker County Policy on Vehicle Safety and Seat Belt Use.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 9/18/06 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 6/1/15

3.17 POLICY ON MENTORING STUDENTS IN THE WALKER COUNTY SCHOOLS

ELIGIBILITY

1. Regular full-time employees shall be eligible to receive a credit for one hour of paid time each week that they serve as a volunteer student mentor during their scheduled work hours in any Walker County school whether it be public, private or charter.

REQUIREMENTS

2. The department head must approve of the employee participating in mentoring during County business hours. Mentoring should not interfere with work duties and employee should try and work this around their lunch if possible to avoid disrupting the work day.

3. An employee who is approved through any Walker County schools, whether it be public, private or charter, to mentor a student must fill out the approved form and turn it in with their time sheet every two weeks.

4. When checking in at the school office, an office worker must sign your county form. A completed and signed form is required to accompany your time sheet for you to receive your one hour of pay when you mentor.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 7/27/09 Effective 8/1/09 Amended 5/10/10 Amended 6/1/15

WALKER COUNTY MENTORING FORM/WEEK #1

Date: _____ Time: _____

Walker County Employee Name _____

Mentoring School Name: _____

School Employee Signature: _____

Walker County Employee Signature: _____

Elected Official Department Head Signature: _____

WALKER COUNTY MENTORING FORM/WEEK #2

Date: _____ Time: _____

Walker County Employee Name: _____

Mentoring School Name: _____

School Employee Signature: _____

Walker County Employee Signature: _____

Elected Official/Department Head Signature: _____

Approved 2 week mentoring form. Attach to timesheet.

3.18 POLICY ON HUNTSVILLE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

COUNTY JUDGE'S OFFICE

1. Will send an email to all elected officials and department heads mid-July to ask for nominations from their department.
2. Nominations must be in the County Judge's Office by August 1st of each year.
3. Two people will be sent to the Leadership Institute each year if funds are available.
4. Two nominated individuals will be selected by drawing during a Commissioners' Court meeting.

ELIGIBILITY

5. Non-elected employees must be employed by the county for at least 5 years before they are eligible.
6. Elected officials may apply themselves but are required to pay for the class with personal funds.
7. If selected it is mandatory to attend the entire program.
8. Extenuating circumstances may be understood for absence.
9. The program consists of:
 - a. A two day mandatory retreat
 - b. One day a month (during work week) for approximately nine months
 - c. All meals included
 - d. Transportation provided for any travel other than to and from the class site
10. Participation in the Leadership Institute Program is voluntary, and not required by the County. Employees will be compensated at their regular rate of pay for activities that occur during the employee's normal working hours. Any employee events that occur outside the employee's normal working hours shall not be compensated. Incidental expenses will not be reimbursed.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 8/17/09 Effective 8/17/09 Amended 5/24/10 Amended 6/1/15

3.19 POLICY ON EMPLOYEE PAID QUARANTINE LEAVE (HB 2073)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide for and maintain employment benefits for certain employees who are ordered to quarantine or isolate due to a possible or known exposure to a communicable disease while on duty.

DEFINITIONS

Supervisor-is the Elected Official or Department Head in charge of the department in which the employee works. In the case of an elected or appointed official, only the health authority may order quarantine or isolation covered by this policy.

Health Authority-has the meaning assigned by section 121.021, Health and Safety Code. A health authority is a physician appointed under the provisions of Chapter 121 to administer state and local laws relating to public health within the appointing body's jurisdiction. A health authority must be: a competent physician with a reputable professional standing who is legally qualified to practice medicine in the state and a resident of the state. They must take an official oath and file with the department. For counties that do not establish a local health department or public health district, they may appoint a physician as health authority to administer state and local laws relating to public health in the county's jurisdiction.

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to the following employees of Walker County, as defined by Local Government Code 180.008:

- Detention Officers
- Certified Emergency Medical Technicians
- Fire Fighters
- Peace Officers

CONDITIONS

The paid leave and benefits provided by this policy are only available to an employee who is ordered to quarantine or isolate by his or her supervisor or the Walker County health authority due to a possible or known exposure to a communicable disease while on duty. An employee must provide proof of an order to quarantine and will be denied paid leave or benefits if the employee fails to provide proof.

BENEFITS

Eligible employees who are on qualifying paid quarantine leave shall receive all employment benefits and compensation, including leave accrual, retirement, and health benefits for the duration of the leave. An employee on qualifying paid quarantine leave will not have their leave balances reduced.

REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

If an employee is ordered to quarantine under the section above, the employee may request to be reimbursed for reasonable costs related to the quarantine, including lodging, medical and transportation. The employee will be required to provide receipts of proof of payment with the request within five (5) days of returning from leave. The requests need to be submitted to the employee's supervisor. The reimbursement request may be denied if the supervisor deems the services unreasonable or unrelated to quarantine.

OFF DUTY EXPOSURES WILL NOT BE COVERED UNDER THIS POLICY.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 09/13/2021 EFFECTIVE 09/13/2021

4.01 POLICY ON WORK SCHEDULES, WORKDAY AND WORKWEEK

WORK SCHEDULES

1. The normal hours of work for Walker County shall be from 8:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m.
2. The normal days of work shall be Monday through Friday except for official holidays. Each elected official or department head shall determine the exact work schedules for their departments.

EXCEPTIONS

3. In order to meet the needs of the County, certain departments or employees may be required to work a schedule that varies from the normal work schedule of the County or they may be subject to call in case of emergency or special need.
4. The need for schedules that vary from the normal schedule shall be determined by each elected official or department head but may not exceed regularly scheduled hours per week if a fiscal impact due to altering the schedule would occur. In these circumstances, the elected official or department shall request prior approval from Commissioners' Court. Variations for emergency purposes need not be approved in court.

WORKDAY

5. A workday for the County shall be defined as the period beginning at midnight and ending exactly 24 consecutive hours later.

WORKWEEK

6. For purposes of record keeping and compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), a workweek for Walker County shall be defined as the period beginning at midnight each Saturday and ending seven consecutive 24 hour periods later (168 hours). Law enforcement employees who fall under the 207(k) exemption shall have a work week of 7 days and 43 hours as established by the Walker County Commissioners' Court.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 11/13/95 Amended 6/1/15

4.02 POLICY ON PAY PERIODS

PAY PERIODS

1. The pay period for Walker County will consist of two workweeks. Regular hours for a pay period will consist of 2 workweeks of 40 hours per workweek for general and administrative staff, and 2 workweeks of 43 hours per workweek for law enforcement. Hours worked exceeding these regular weekly hours will be overtime.

2. Payroll checks shall be issued according to the schedule determined by the County Treasurer and County Auditor, as approved by Commissioners' Court. If a payday falls on a holiday, paychecks shall be issued on the last workday immediately preceding the holiday.

Deductions shall be made from each employee's paycheck for federal withholding, social security, Medicare, and any other deductions required by law. Employees eligible for membership in the Texas County and District Retirement System shall have their contributions to that system deducted from each paycheck. Any optional deduction authorized by the Commissioners' Court and approved by the employee shall also be made from the employee's paycheck.

SALARY ADVANCES

3. Salary advances shall not be made to any employee for any reason.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 9/9/99 EFFECTIVE 10/1/99 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 6/1/15

4.03 POLICY ON MINIMUM WAGE, OVERTIME PAY & COMP TIME

FLSA COMPLIANCE

1. In administering its wage and salary program, the minimum standards of Walker County shall be the basic standards set forth in the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and its amendments as it applies to county governments. Annually, Commissions' Court sets the compensation for employees in accordance with federal, state and county policy. Walker County complies with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) as outlined in the FLSA Safe Harbor guidelines. Law enforcement employees are treated in accordance with the 207(k) exemption of the FLSA. The Commissioners' Court has adopted this exemption. All non-exempt employees shall be paid an hourly wage.

APPLICABILITY

2. This policy shall apply to all employees of Walker County who are not specifically exempt from the provisions of the FLSA.

3. The County Judge shall be responsible, with the assistance of other elected officials and department heads, for identifying the positions exempt under the FLSA.

OVERTIME

4. In calculating "hours worked" for purposes of overtime computation, hours worked shall include only hours spent in the service of the County (as defined in the FLSA) and shall exclude all paid leave.

5. Overtime shall be all hours actually worked in excess of forty (40) for regular employees and forty-three (43) for law enforcement during the workweek and forty (40) per pay period for EMS employees (which includes vacation, comp time and holidays taken) as defined in the 4.01, Policy on Work Schedules, Workday and Workweek.

OVERTIME COMPENSATION

6. A non-exempt employee who works overtime during the work week shall:

- a. Have overtime accounted for at a rate of one and one-half (1 1/2) hours for each hour worked over forty (40) for regular employees during the workweek unless taken during the same week.
- b. Hours worked in a time period not eligible to be paid at the (1 1/2) overtime rate because other leave time or holidays taken during the work week will be paid at straight time or added to comp time at straight time depending on the how the department budgets for overtime.
- c. Eligible employees shall be paid in the form of comp time off in accordance with Walker County policy and the provisions of the FLSA. All other eligible employees shall receive paid comp time off at a rate of one and one half (1 1/2) times the amount of overtime worked.

MAXIMUM COMP TIME

7. The maximum comp time accrual for any employee shall be the maximum allowed under the provision of the FLSA. (240 - regular employees)

8. When an employee has reached the maximum comp time accrual, he/she shall be compensated in wages at a rate of one and one half (1 1/2) times his/her regular rate for any additional overtime hours worked until comp time has been taken to bring the balance below the maximum. Employees shall be allowed to use earned comp time within a reasonable time after it is requested provided that the employee absence will not place an undue hardship on department operations. Walker County shall have the right to require employees to use comp time at the convenience of the County.

USE OF COMP TIME

9. Use of comp time shall be subject to approval by the employee's supervisor.
10. Comp time may be used as vacation, sick leave, or for any other reason as leave with pay.
11. If an individual's employment terminates before all of his/her earned comp time is used, he/she will be paid for all unused time at his/her regular rate on his/her final paycheck.

RECORD KEEPING

12. Each employee shall be responsible for recording any comp time taken within a pay period on the time sheet for that pay period.

13. The County Treasurer shall be responsible for keeping records of all comp time earned and used by eligible County employees and shall update the balance due for each employee at the end of each pay period.

ROAD AND BRIDGE EMPLOYEES

14. Road and bridge employees shall be compensated in wages at a rate of one and one half (1 1/2) times his/her regular rate for any overtime hours worked over forty (40) hours per week and straight time for any time that, does not qualify for the one and one half (1 1/2) times his/her regular rate unless they otherwise note on their timesheet for the current pay period that the employee would rather accrue comp time. Road & Bridge Employees are capped at 40 hours comp time.

WCPSCC (WALKER COUNTY PUBLIC SAFETY COMBINED COMMUNICATIONS) EMPLOYEE

15. WCPCC employees shall be compensated at a rate of one and one half (1 1/2) times his/her regular rate for any overtime hours worked over forty (40) hours per week and straight time for any time that does not qualify for the one and one half (1 1/2) times his/her regular rate unless they otherwise note on their timesheet for the current pay period that the employee would rather accrue comp time. WCPCC employees are capped at 40 hours comp time.

EMS MEDICAL PERSONNEL

16. Certified medical personnel working for EMS shall be compensated in wages at a rate of one and one half (1 1/2) times his/her regular rate for any overtime unless they otherwise note on their timesheet for the current pay period that the employee would rather accrue comp time. Certified medical personnel working for EMS are capped at 48 hours comp time.

LAW ENFORCEMENT EMPLOYEES WORKING UNDER THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND JAIL

17. Overtime compensation for law enforcement employees of the County shall at least meet the minimum standards set forth in the Fair Labor Standards Act and any other federal or state legislation which applies.

18. Law enforcement employees shall be compensated in wages at a rate of one and one-half (1 1/2) times his/her regular rate for any overtime worked over forty-three (43) hours per workweek.

19. Law enforcement employees will be paid straight time for hours worked between forty (40) and forty-three (43) hours during a workweek.

20. Law enforcement employees will be paid for comp time unless they otherwise note on their timesheet for the current pay period that they would rather accrue comp time. Law enforcement employees are capped at 40 hours comp time.

LIST OF EXEMPT EMPLOYEES

21. The County Judge's Office and Human Resources shall maintain the official list of FLSA exempt employees as approved in Commissioners' Court.

PAYMENT OF OVERTIME FOR EXEMPT EMPLOYEES

22. During a major event/disaster, Exempt Employees may be paid for excessive overtime if deemed as unavoidable and necessary and approved by Commissioners' Court. The rate of pay shall be the normal hourly rate for that exempt employee.

BORROWING

23. Employees shall not be able to borrow leave time against possible future accruals.

PAYMENT OF OVERTIME FOR NON-EXEMPT EMPLOYEES

24. Walker County shall retain the right to "buy back" all or part of an employee's unused comp time by paying the employee for that time at the employee's regular rate of pay. Walker County shall retain the right to pay all or part of the overtime worked in any work week by paying for that overtime at one and one half (1 ½) the employee's regular rate of pay.

PAY AT TERMINATION

25. Comp time balances will be compensated at the regular rate of pay at termination.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 9/11/03 EFFECTIVE 10/1/03 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 1/5/09 Amended 6/1/15

4.04 POLICY ON EMPLOYEE PAYROLL AND RECORDS

TIME RECORDS

1. The County Treasurer's records will be the official records of the County.
2. The County Treasurer shall be required to keep copies of all time sheets and other payroll records as required by record retention statutes.
3. NON-EXEMPT EMPLOYEES shall be required to keep an accurate time sheet each pay period which shows all hours worked and all leave, paid and unpaid, taken on a daily basis
4. A standardized timesheet shall be used to report time employees worked.
5. EXEMPT EMPLOYEES shall be required to keep accurate records of all paid leave taken (vacation, sick, etc.) on a daily basis. Exempt employees receive a salary which compensates them for all hours worked for the County though not all salaried employees are exempt. This salary is established at hire or when classified as an exempt employee. While an exempt employee's salary is subject to review and modification, the salary will be an established amount that is not subject to deduction for variation in the quantity and quality of the work performed. Exempt employees wages may be reduced for certain benefits deductions or any other reductions authorized by federal or state law.
6. On the first work day following the end of the pay period, each employee shall be required to sign his/her completed time sheet and turn it in to his/her supervisor.
7. When the supervisor receives the time sheets from his/her employees, the supervisor shall review all the time sheets for completeness and accuracy and make any corrections, with the knowledge of the employee involved, which are necessary.
8. When the supervisor finishes reviewing the time sheets, the elected official or Department Head shall sign them and submit them to the County Treasurer's Office the first working day following the end of the pay period. The elected official or department head may designate a supervisor to sign in his/her absence.

RETENTION OF RECORDS

9. Elected officials and department heads shall manage employee records that are maintained in their office in conformance with applicable laws and records retention requirements.

OFFICIAL RECORDS

10. It is important that the official Walker County personnel records be accurate and up to date. Employees should promptly notify Human Resources of any changes of name, home address, telephone numbers, or other pertinent information. The Public Information Act allows employees to keep certain information such as social security number, home address, telephone number, and information regarding relatives private by requesting in writing not to allow this information released to the public no later than 14 days after an employee's first day of employment. Official records maintained in Human Resources shall include the application of a new employee, change of status forms, payroll forms, employee benefit election forms, and other human resources documents. The assignment of County equipment form shall be maintained by the department.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/24/93 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 5/10/10 Amended 6/1/15

4.05 POLICY ON TERMINATION

TERMINATION PAY

1. If an employee leaves the service of the County his/her final pay check shall include:
 - a. Pay for all hours worked which payment has not been received including, where applicable, time and one-half for overtime worked;
 - b. Where applicable, pay for overtime leave which has been earned but not yet used;
 - c. Pay for any leave time for which payment is due under the provisions of the Walker County Personnel Policies; and
 - d. Pay any money owed to Walker County through payroll deduction for nonexempt employees and reimbursement to the County through the Treasurer's Office for exempt employees.
2. In order to ensure that the proper amount is paid to a terminating employee, the final time sheet must be submitted to Payroll as soon as possible after the employee's last day to work.
3. Elected officials/department heads must complete the standardized Employee Status Change Form and forward the form to Payroll. Written confirmation from the elected official/department heads shall also be sent to Payroll indicating that the terminating employee has returned all county assigned equipment, vehicles, uniforms, cell phones, keys, identification tag, credit cards, etc. Payroll shall hold the final check until receipt of this notification.
4. If the employee previously used direct deposit and at time of the final check, Payroll has received notification that all county assigned items have been returned to the County, the final check can be direct deposited.
5. When an employee terminates, the Employee Status Change Form should be immediately completed and faxed/emailed to Payroll and the County Auditor so that credit cards can be cancelled, long distance code is cancelled, any cell phone changes made are recovered, Information System access removed, fuel access removed, uniform companies notified, etc. The original form may then be sent thru trunk mail.
6. If an employee's last day to work is in the middle of a pay period, the employee may receive a paycheck on the regular pay day if the employee has enough accumulated overtime, and/or vacation leave balances to ensure that he/she is not overpaid, or if Payroll is notified in a timely manner so that the proper amount can be paid.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF TERMINATION

7. An employees' termination date shall be his/her last day physically present at the job site.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/1/95 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 6/1/15

4.06 FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT SAFE HARBOR

OBJECTIVE

1. Walker County makes every effort to pay its employees correctly. Occasionally, however, inadvertent mistakes can happen. When mistakes do happen and are called to Payroll's attention, Walker County will promptly make any corrections necessary. Employees should review their payroll detail statement when received to make sure it is correct. If an employee believes a mistake has occurred or if there are questions, an employee should use the reporting procedure outlined below. If underpaid or overpaid, the County will make the necessary corrections on the next payroll.

2. It is a violation of Walker County policy for any employee to falsify a time sheet, or to alter another employee's time sheet. It is also a serious violation of County policy for any employee, supervisor or official to instruct another employee to incorrectly or falsely report hours worked, or to alter another employee's time sheet to under or over report hours worked. If anyone instructs an employee to incorrectly or falsely under or over report their hours worked or alter another employee's time records to inaccurately or falsely report that employee's hours worked, employees should report it immediately to Payroll.

NON-EXEMPT EMPLOYEES

3. Employees who are classified as non-exempt employees must maintain an accurate record of the total hours they work each day. It is the responsibility of each employee to verify that their time sheets are correct. Time sheets must accurately reflect all regular and overtime hours worked; any absences, late arrivals, early departures, and meal breaks. Employee shall not sign their time sheet if it is not accurate. When employees receive their pay checks, they should verify immediately that they were paid correctly for all regular and overtime hours worked each work week. Employees shall also verify all leave was accrued correctly.

4. Non-exempt employees, unless authorized by their supervisor, should not work any hours that are not authorized. Employees should not start work early, finish work late, work during a meal break, or perform any other extra or overtime work unless authorized to do so. Time worked is to be recorded on the employee's time sheet. Employees are prohibited from performing any "off-the-clock" work. "Off-the-clock" work means work an employee may perform but fails to report on your time sheet. Any employee who fails to report or inaccurately reports any hours worked will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Employees will be paid for work performed. If an employee is directed to work without documenting time worked, the employee must immediately report it.

EXEMPT EMPLOYEES

5. An individual classified as an exempt salaried employee, will receive a salary which is intended to compensate them for all hours worked for the County. This salary will be established at the time of hire or when the employee becomes classified as an exempt employee. While it may be subject to review and modification from time to time, the salary will be a pre-determined amount that will not be subject to deductions for variations in the quantity or quality of the work performed.

6. Exempt employee's salary may also be reduced for certain types of deductions such as your portion of health, dental or life insurance premiums; state, federal or local taxes, social security, retirement or voluntary contributions to a deferred compensation plan. In any workweek in which an employee performed any work, their wages may be reduced for any of the following reasons:

- a. absence from work for one or more full days for personal reasons, other than sickness or disability;
- b. full day disciplinary suspensions for infractions of our written policies and procedures;
- c. full day for violating safety rules of a major significance;
- d. Family and Medical Leave or Military Leave absences;

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- e. to offset amounts received as payment for jury and witness fees or military pay; or
 - f. the first or last week of employment in the event an employee worked less than a full week.
7. For an exempt employee, in any workweek in which work is performed, their salary will not be reduced for any of the following reasons:
- a. partial day absences for personal reasons, sickness or disability;
 - b. absence because a facility is closed on a scheduled work day;
 - c. absence because of the County's operating requirements;
 - d. absences for jury duty, attendance as a witness, or military leave in any week in which the employee performed any work; or
 - e. any other deductions prohibited by federal and state law.
8. It is not an improper deduction to reduce an exempt employee's accrued vacation, personal or other forms of paid time off for full or partial day absences for personal reasons, sickness or disability.

REPORTING POSSIBLE TIME AND DEDUCTION ERRORS

9. If an employee has questions about their deductions, they shall immediately contact their supervisor. If an employee believes they have been subject to any improper deductions or their pay does not accurately reflect hours worked, the employee should immediately report the matter to Payroll. If an employee has not received a satisfactory response within five business days after reporting the incident, the employee shall immediately contact the County Judge's Office. Every report will be fully investigated and corrective action will be taken where appropriate, up to and including discharge for any employee(s) who violates this policy.

RETALIATION PROHIBITED

10. In addition, the County will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who report alleged violations of this policy or who cooperate in the County's investigation of such reports. Retaliation is unacceptable, and any form of retaliation in violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 6/1/15

5.01 POLICY ON SEPARATION

TYPES

1. All separations from employment with County shall be designated as one of the following types:
 - a. Resignation;
 - b. Retirement;
 - c. Termination;
 - d. Reduction in Force (Layoff); or
 - e. Death

RESIGNATION

2. A resignation shall be classified as any situation in which an employee voluntarily leaves his/her employment with Walker County and the separation does not fall into one of the other categories.
3. To resign in good standing, the employee shall be required to notify his/her supervisor of the intent to resign at least ten (10) working days prior to the last day of work. The employee shall be responsible to return any County property in their care, custody, or control to the County.
4. A department head shall be responsible for notifying Payroll as soon as an employee announces his/her intent to resign.

RETIREMENT

5. A retirement is any situation in which an employee meets the requirements to collect benefits under the Texas County and District Retirement System and elects to leave employment to do so. The same requirements for resignation apply to retirement except for the fact that the employee should notify his/her supervisor at least thirty (30) days prior to the last day of work so that any retirement benefits due may be started promptly.

TERMINATION

6. A termination shall be any involuntary separation from employment which does not fall into one of the other categories of separation.
7. Walker County employment is at will and a elected official or department head may dismiss an employee at any time, with or without cause, for any legal reason or no reason at all. Likewise an employee may resign at any time. However, as noted above, an employee shall notify his/her supervisor of the employee's intent to resign at least ten working days prior to the last day of work, in order to resign in good standing.

REDUCTION IN FORCE

8. An employee shall be separated because of reduction in force when his/her position is abolished or when there is lack of funds, lack of work, or the position does not receive budgetary funding.

DEATH

9. If an employee dies while in the service of the County, his/her designated beneficiary or estate shall receive all earned pay and payable benefits.
10. If an elected official dies while in service of the County his/her final paycheck will include payment for the remainder of the current pay period and will be paid to his/her designated beneficiary or estate.

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11. The deceased elected official or employee's final paycheck may be made to the executor or administrator of the estate who has either a Letter of Testamentary or Letter of Administration. If the deceased elected official or employee has a surviving spouse with an Affidavit of Surviving Spouse, the paycheck may be made to the surviving spouse.

REHIRE AFTER SEPARATION

12. An employee including an elected official must have a bona fide separation in service which is a true separation in service between Walker County and employee in which the employer/employee relationship is completely severed. This means there is not an expectation, understanding or agreement the termination is temporary or that the employee will be rehired in the future. This applies even if the employee is rehired into another position, is paid more or less, is employed in another department, works different hours or is hired as an independent contractor.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 7/27/95 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 5/10/10 Amended 6/1/15

5.02 POLICY ON LAYOFFS

REASONS

1. While such action is avoided whenever possible, employees may be laid off where an elected official/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 employees.
2. If layoffs are required, they may be based on job performance and qualifications for the position(s) remaining within the department.
3. Laid off employees are eligible to reapply for new openings, but previous employment shall not be considered as guaranteeing any rights to another job.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/24/93 Amended 5/10/10 Amended 6/1/15

6.01 POLICY ON DISCIPLINE

GENERAL

1. The County recognizes employee performance and disciplinary issues do not always fall into neatly defined categories. The disciplinary policy guidelines below are therefore simply guidelines for the disciplinary process. The County recognizes that these guidelines will not necessarily apply to all situations, and that the County's desire to provide employees with progressive discipline may not always apply depending upon the circumstances.

All County employees are "at will" employees and nothing in this policy gives an employee any contract of employment, guarantee of any duration of employment, or any other property interest in their job. Walker County shall have the right to terminate the employment of any employee for any legal reason or no reason, at any time either with or without notice. The County also retains the right to change any condition, benefit, privilege, or policy of employment at any time with or without notice.

SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITY

2. Each supervisor may be responsible for noting and pointing out to the employee whenever the employee's work habits, production, or personal conduct on the job falls below the acceptable level.

VERBAL NOTIFICATION

3. In counseling with an employee concerning failure to meet acceptable standards, the supervisor shall point out the following to the employee:

- a. What action or behavior is failing to meet the acceptable standard;
- b. What is the acceptable standard;
- c. Why does failure to meet the standard create a problem;
- d. What must the employee do to meet the standard; and
- e. What is the time frame in which the standard must be met.

IMMEDIATE FORMAL DISCIPLINE

4. While it is desirable to counsel with an employee prior to initiating formal discipline, this policy shall not be interpreted to prevent immediate formal action whenever the best interest of the County and its effective operation require it.

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

5. If the initial informal counseling session fails to produce the results desired, progressive discipline may be warranted. However, as noted above, the particular circumstances at issue may not be appropriate for progress discipline. For example, some offenses may be so egregious as to warrant immediate termination. Conversely, other offenses may be so minor that further verbal counseling may be appropriate before implementing progress discipline. Nevertheless, the following progressive disciplinary process may be appropriate:

- a. Formal Verbal Warning - Records of such warnings shall be retained by the supervisor but not be placed in the employee's personnel records unless the discipline process goes to the next step.
- b. Written Reprimand - A copy of the written reprimand shall be placed in the employee's personnel file. The written reprimand shall be to the employee, and the employee shall sign it in front of a witness. The witness and supervisor shall also sign and date the reprimand.
- c. Suspension - Suspensions for up to fifteen (15) days without pay may be given after consultation with the County Judge and District Attorney.

WRITTEN NOTIFICATION

6. Except in instances of verbal warnings, a supervisor disciplining an employee may provide the employee with written documentation which includes:

- a. A description of the action or activity which is not meeting the acceptable standard;
- b. A statement of what the acceptable standard is;
- c. A statement as to why failure to meet the acceptable standard is a problem;
- d. A summary of what has been done to make the employee aware of the acceptable standard and to help him/her meet it;
- e. A summary of the discipline that has already been imposed;
- f. A description of the action the employee must take to meet the standard;
- g. A statement of the time limit in which the standard must be met; and (This does not apply at the last step of the discipline which is involuntary separation.)
- h. A statement of what the consequences will be if the employee fails to meet the standard within the established time frame. (This does not apply at the last step of the discipline process which is involuntary separation.)

REASONS FOR DISCIPLINE

7. This is not an all-inclusive list but reasons for taking disciplinary action may include but not be limited to:

- a. Insubordination;
- b. Absence without approval, including failure to notify a supervisor of sick leave;
- c. Repeated tardiness or early departure;
- d. Endangering the safety of themselves or others through negligent or willful acts;
- e. Intoxication or drug abuse while on duty;
- f. Unauthorized use of public funds or property;
- g. Violation of the requirements of these personnel policies;
- h. Conviction of a felony or misdemeanor;
- i. Falsification of official documents or records;
- j. Unauthorized use of official information or unauthorized disclosure of confidential information;
- k. Conviction of official misconduct;
- l. Unauthorized or abusive use of official authority;
- m. Incompetence or neglect of duty;
- n. Engaging in outside employment or activities which conflicts or interferes with the performance of duties for the County; and

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- o. Any violation of the work rules and policies set forth in the County's Personnel Policy Manual.

EFFECTS OF DISCIPLINE

8. Disciplinary action shall not automatically or permanently disqualify an employee from consideration for future promotions, pay increases, or other beneficial personnel action.

SUSPENSION FOR FELONY

9. The elected official/department head shall have the authority to review the facts of situations where an employee is indicted for a felony or accused by information of official misconduct or oppression and decide whether the employee should be suspended, with or without pay, until the trial or appeal (if any) is completed.

10. A suspended employee may be entitled to reinstatement to the position held before suspension, without loss of benefits or pay, if the indictment or informal-action is dismissed, the employee acquitted, or the conviction reversed on appeal.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/24/93 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 6/1/15

7.01 POLICY ON GRIEVANCES AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

RIGHT OF GRIEVANCE

1. Employees who feel they have been improperly or unfairly treated in their job or in their relationship with the County shall have the right to file a grievance. Written grievances may not be prepared on County time.
2. Actions or results which occur and which are beyond the control of the County shall not be considered grounds for grievance procedure.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

3. Grievances shall be handled in accordance with the attached grievance procedure.

STOPPING THE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

4. Only the employee who has filed the grievance shall be able to stop the grievance procedure either by action or inaction.
5. The grievance procedure shall be stopped if:
 - a. The employee indicates by dated written documentation he/she is satisfied with the action to resolve the grievance at any level of the grievance procedure;
 - b. The employee, for any reason, indicates by dated written documentation that he/she no longer wishes to continue the grievance procedure; or
 - c. The employee fails to take action to continue with the next step of the procedure within three working days of completion of the prior step (elected official/department head will keep record of this step).

TIMELY FILING

6. Grievances must be filed within five (5) working days of the occurrence of the incident causing the grievance.

ADVERSE ACTION

7. No adverse action shall be taken against any employee for reason of his/her exercise of the right to file a grievance.

COMBINED STEP

8. If the employee's immediate supervisor is the elected official/department head, Step2 of the grievance procedure may be eliminated and the employee may go immediately to Step3 from Step1.

STEP 1

- a. Employee informally discusses grievance with his/her supervisor.
- b. Supervisor decides what action, if any will be taken in regard to the grievance. Narrative will be written by the elected official/department head describing the grievance and any action taken or reason for no action.
- c. If Step 1 does not result in a resolution of the grievance, the employee may proceed to Step 2, which is the first step of the formal grievance procedure, within five (5) working days after the informal discussion with his/her supervisor.

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STEP 2

- a. The employee prepares a Grievance Report (WCFM-003) giving the details of the grievance and stating the specific remedial action requested.
- b. Employee physically gives Grievance Report (WCFM-003) to supervisor.
- c. Supervisor reviews the facts of the grievance, makes a decision as to what action, if any, is to be taken to resolve the grievance and communicates the decision in writing to the employee within five (5) working days after having received the grievance.
- d. If the employee is not satisfied with the decision in Step 2 or if the supervisor fails to respond within five (5) working days, the employee may take the grievance to Step 3 within three working days.

STEP 3

- a. The employee physically submits a written copy of the Grievance Report (WCFM-003) to the elected official/department head along with a copy of the decision made by the supervisor or a statement that the supervisor failed to provide a decision within the five (5) day limit if such is the case.
- b. The elected official/department head reviews the details of the grievance and, within five (5) working days, provides the employee with a written statement of what action, if any, is to be taken to resolve the grievance.
- c. If the employee is not satisfied with the decision of the elected official/department head or if the department head fails to respond within five (5) working days, the employee may take the grievance to the next step within five (5) working days.
- d. For employees who work for an elected official, step 3 is the final decision.

STEP 4

- a. The employee physically submits a copy of the Grievance Report (WCFM-003) to the County Judge or judicial authority over an appointed official along with copies of any decisions made in Steps 2 and 3 or statements of a failure of the supervisor or department head to respond where such is the case.
- b. The County Judge presents the grievance to the members of the Commissioners' Court.
- c. The Commissioners' Court gathers any additional information that may be pertinent to the grievance and, by majority decision at the next regular meeting of the Court, determines what action, if any, is to be taken to resolve the grievance.
- d. The County Judge or judicial authority over an appointed official provides the employee with a written copy of the decision made by the Commissioners' Court within five (5) working days after the meeting at which the decision was made.

The completion of Step 4 is the end of the internal grievance process.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 6/26/95 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 6/1/15

Employee's Name: _____
Job Classification: _____
Department: _____
Statement of Grievance: _____

What would be required, in your opinion, to resolve this grievance?

Attempts at oral discussion have not resolved this grievance to my satisfaction. I understand the grievance procedure and timetables established in the Personnel Policies.

(Employee's Signature)

Received by: _____
(Date)

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8.01 POLICY ON EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

GENERAL POLICY

1. It is the policy of Walker County that employees be reimbursed for necessary and reasonable job related expenses incurred in the authorized conduct of County business. All requests for reimbursement of expenses are subject to documentation and reasonableness and will be honored in conformance with adopted policies and procedures.

COMPLIANCE WITH IRS IN REPORTED TAXABLE REIMBURSEMENTS

2. The County will comply with IRS regulations in reporting certain travel reimbursements (generally involving non-overnight travel) as reportable income for income tax purposes. All travel reimbursements that are required to be reported as taxable income will be reimbursed *as part of the biweekly payroll*. These requests must be turned in to the County Auditor's Office at the time that time sheets are turned in. A special form will be provided by the County Auditor for this purpose.

USE OF COUNTY CREDIT CARD/ADVANCES

3. For meals on non-overnight travel, a county credit card may NOT be used because the reimbursement by the County will be taxable income to the employee. Other costs such as parking and fuel for a county vehicle may be placed on a credit card.

4. An employee may NOT use a county credit card to pay for a meal.

5. In general, the cost of meals, travel etc. will be on a reimbursement basis. Advances require • prior approval of the Department Head. An employee may request an advance if waiting for reimbursement would cause a hardship on the employee by preparing a travel request form noting the nature of the hardship.

COUNTY TRAVEL

6. All necessary travel by county employees for conducting County business within the county is authorized, within budget restraints. Employees, including the E.M.S. Medical Director, who does not get a car allowance but use their private automobile in the scope of business, shall be reimbursed upon monthly submission of the mileage report on an approved form to the County Auditor's Office. Mileage is reimbursed at the current rate used by the Internal Revenue Service. Employees are expected to report the shortest distance between destinations for all travel. Travel between an employee's residence and a county office is not allowable for reimbursement. Mileage related to travel for training should be submitted with the travel request form.

OUT-OF-COUNTY TRAVEL

7. The Department Head is responsible for authorizing, within budget restraints, all out-of-county travel by themselves or their employees. Reimbursement of out-of-county travel costs is based upon the most economical mode of travel that is reasonably available. When personal automobiles are used, reimbursement is calculated using a Travel Mileage Guide plus up to 50 miles to cover travel between lodging and conference sites at the current rate used by the Internal Revenue Service. If using air service, reimbursement will only be for the amount of a tourist class ticket.

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OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL

8. Commissioners' Court is responsible for authorizing, within budget restraints, all out-of-state travel for all County employees. The exceptions are for Sheriff Deputies to transport prisoners from out of state, conduct criminal investigations and attend training as necessary in their official capacity of law enforcement. Reimbursement of out-of-state travel costs is based upon the most economic mode of travel that is reasonably available. When automobiles are used, reimbursement is allowed on the basis of actual mileage traveled or by using the mileage chart at the current rate used by the Internal Revenue Service. If using air service, reimbursement will only be for the amount of a tourist class ticket.

SUBSISTENCE

9. Employees engaged in necessary and authorized travel outside Walker County are reimbursed for actual subsistence expenses. Subject to documentation and reasonableness, subsistence expenses will be reimbursed, within the limit- actions, for the following:

a. Seminar registration.

b. Lodging - Up to the cost of the sponsoring hotel or necessary and reasonable lodging charges. Governmental type accommodations and rates are to be requested at all times. Room expense, including tax, is to be entered by day, and receipts are to be attached to the Travel Expense Form. Charges on the hotel bill for other than lodging are to be entered by day under their proper classification. An employee is expected to use the single room rate. If a non-county employee travels with the employee, the employee will be responsible for the difference in the single rate and increased occupancy charge. In general, the County will NOT reimburse the lodging cost for the night a seminar ends if the employee can reasonably be expected to return home. Employees should minimize overnight stays. It is generally expected that reimbursement for lodging the night prior to a seminar will be reimbursable only if the driving distance and conference start time make it unreasonable to travel the day of the seminar/meeting. If anything other than the room charge and hotel parking appear on the bill that will not be paid by the county, it is the responsibility of the employee to pay the supplemental charges and not charge to the county credit card. If the employee will be requesting reimbursement for any of the supplemental charges, a *detailed* receipt is required. Baggage handling valet parking etc. is not reimbursable.

c. Telephone - Safe arrival calls are considered appropriate when incurred in connection with County business. Employees are encouraged to use a cell phone to avoid long distance charges. Otherwise, only County related calls are reimbursable.

MEALS-OUT OF COUNTY TRAVEL

d. Conferences, workshops, seminars, meetings, etc., that qualify for \$50 per day: Tips are included in the allowance. A department may elect to require receipts and reimburse the actual cost of the meal in lieu of a per-diem up to a maximum of the per diem rate. (Meals will be on a reimbursement basis and not charged to the County Credit Card.)

1.) Non-Overnight travel for a full day sessions of at least six (6) hours within a 75 mile radius of the primary work place will be taxed in accordance with IRS regulations.

2.) Non-Overnight travel for sessions outside the 75 mile radius will be taxed in accordance with IRS regulations.

3.) Overnight travel for a full day session of at least six (6) hours outside the 75 mile radius. The day of departure and day of return will be prorated based on time of departure and time of return.

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4.) If travel expenditures are to be reimbursed by an outside state or federal agency, the requirements of the outside agency prevail.

e. Conferences, workshops, seminars, meetings, etc., that qualify for \$35 per day: Same rules apply for travel related to work such as pick up of a part, transportation of a prisoner, etc. A department may elect to require receipts and reimburse the actual cost of the meal in lieu of a per-diem up to a maximum of the per diem rate. (Meals will be on a reimbursement basis and not charged to the County Credit Card).

1.) Anything less than a six (6) hour session within a 75 mile radius of the primary workplace will be taxed in accordance with IRS regulations.

2.) Overnight trip departing after 12 noon or returning before 5:00 p.m.

f. A copy of the conference agenda must be attached and the nature of the business conducted included on the travel reimbursement form.

g. Advances will not be given for one day trips.

h. All Travel Expense Forms shall be filled out and signed in ink, not pencil. The most current standardized form(s) provided by the County Auditor's Office must be used and all information requested on the form provided, including the detailed receipts, purpose of the travel, and agenda/itinerary/certificate with the signature by the Department head/elected official and employee making the request for reimbursement.

i. Travel expense statements shall be submitted within ten (10) working days of the return date. Reimbursements for unused advances should be made to the County in the form of a check or money order, payable to the "Walker County Treasurer".

PARKING AND TOLL ROADS

j. Receipts are required for parking charges and toll road charges.

BUSINESS MEALS

k. While employees are not expected to incur business-related expenses for meals on a regular basis, such meals furnished under circumstances which are generally considered to be conducive to a business discussion are reimbursable. Prior Department Head approval is required for all business meals. Reimbursement is limited to \$15 per person. Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable. The following detail is required for the Travel Expense Form:

1.) Cost (including tips, not to exceed 15%, and tax, if any)

2.) Date

3.) Name and location of restaurant

4.) Indication of whether the meal is breakfast, luncheon, or dinner

5.) Name, titles or other designations and business relationships or occupations of persons dined

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6.) Business reason

7.) Detailed receipt (credit card total not acceptable)

I. Alcoholic beverages are not reimbursable

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S COURT

DATE: 1/13/97 EFFECTIVE 4/27/98 REVISED 3/20/06 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 5/12/08 Amended
12/8/08 Amended 1/4/10 Amended 12/12/16 Amended 11/4/19 Amended 1/27/25

9.01 POLICY ON NETWORK & ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

GENERAL

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this Policy is to establish standard operating procedures for the Internet, e-mail, development and maintenance of Walker County Web Site, and the use of network or electronic communications devices or equipment owned, leased, or supplied by Walker County. Electronic communications equipment are defined as, but not limited to: Computers including Software and all peripherals, cell phones, and other personal communication devices provided or funded by Walker County.

APPLICABILITY

2. This Policy is directive in nature, and applies to all Walker County employees (temporary and full time) to include Contract employees, elected and appointed officials, using Walker County electronics communications equipment. In addition, the Directives and Operating procedures set forth in this Policy are intended to be in compliance with Federal and the State of Texas Laws to include the Open Records Act. Department Heads are encouraged to augment this document with their existing operating procedures; however, should there be a conflict between this document and other operating procedures, this Policy will take precedence.

ADMINISTRATION

3. The distribution of this Policy will be the responsibility of the Human Resource Department. Copies will be furnished to all current and newly hired Walker County employees.

CONTROLLING AUTHORITY

4. The Controlling authority for the Network and Electronic Communications Policy will be the Walker County Commissioners' Court. In addition, and after the initial approval of this Policy, the Information Technology (IT) Committee will review this document periodically for changes (additions and/or deletions). The IT Committee will be the approving authority for **all** Walker County Web pages to include design, layout and content. The IT Committee will consist of a minimum of (7) people appointed by Commissioners' Court.

PROPERTY AND PROPRIETARY ISSUES

5. All network and electronic communications systems and equipment are Walker County property to include hardware, software, temporary or permanent electronic data files and/or any related systems or devices used in the transmission, receipt or storage of electronic communications. Consequently and therefore, all voice mail and electronic messages (including text and email) are the property of Walker County and may be retrieved from permanent storage even though they have been deleted by the sender and receiver. These electronic communication messages may even be used in disciplinary proceedings. Notwithstanding that any and all electronic communications are Walker County property, any and all opinions made using a County network communications system, whether implied or expressed, are those of the individual and not necessarily the opinions of Walker County.

RESPONSIBILITIES

WALKER COUNTY

6. It is the responsibility of Walker County Officials to ensure that network and electronic communications equipment are used for their intended purposes. This includes the promulgation of specific guidelines and violations in the use of network and electronic communications equipment by Walker County employees.

DEPARTMENT HEADS

7. It is the responsibility of the Department Heads to effectively communicate the intended use and operation of network and electronic communications equipment to their respective personnel.

WALKER COUNTY EMPLOYEES

8. It is the responsibility of all Walker County employees to conduct themselves in a mature, respectful and responsible manner, when using any of the Walker County network and electronic communications equipment. In addition, Walker County employees have the added responsibility to the citizens and taxpayers of Walker County to report all violations to their respective Supervisor or Department Head and the IT Manager.

VIOLATIONS AND PROHIBITED USES

GENERAL

9. Using Walker County network and electronic communications equipment or systems in violation of this Policy or to violate other Walker County policies is strictly prohibited. Violations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and can result in disciplinary action up to, and including employee dismissal. Electronic messages transmitted with Walker County equipment are subject to all state, federal and local laws. As such, violations, which are of a criminal nature, may be referred for criminal prosecution.

VIOLATIONS

10. The following list, which is not an all-inclusive list, comprises the most common violations that occur when using network and electronic communications equipment. The list is subject to be revised as needed. Department Heads are responsible for ensuring that their employees are fully aware of the illegalities below, and that their employees follow a strict compliance policy. Department Heads are further encouraged to revisit the list with their employees through meetings and special events to promote compliance.

- a. Intercepting, eavesdropping, recording, or altering another person's electronic message.
- b. Adopting the identity of another person on any electronic message, attempting to send electronic mail anonymously, or using another person's password.
- c. Misrepresenting your affiliation on any electronic message.
- d. Composing and/or transmitting electronic communications, which contain racial and sexual slurs or jokes, harassing, intimidating, abusive, and/or offensive material to others.
- e. Using network and electronic communications systems in such a way that causes Walker County to be charged a fee by another person or entity.
- f. Using Walker County network and electronic communications equipment for any personal commercial or promotional purpose, including personal messages offering to buy or sell goods or services.
- g. Using Walker County network and electronic communications equipment to send or receive software in violation of copyright laws.
- h. Using Walker County network and electronic communications equipment to communicate any material regarding confidential information from a person's personnel file, medical record, or information regarding a person's health condition, financial status, or a person's home address, telephone number, or social security number, (Unless expressly authorized).
- i. Using Walker County network and electronic communications equipment to communicate any material of a political, religious, indecent, obscene or derogatory nature.
- j. Using Walker County network and electronic communications equipment to send or receive messages of sexual explicit material (except when specifically authorized by law enforcement personnel).
- k. Participating in the development, propagation or forwarding of computer viruses.

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- l. Allowing or providing access to unauthorized personnel the use of Walker County Internet services or network and electronic communications equipment, to individuals or organizations.
- m. Selling or distributing Walker County information, software, or services for personal gain or profit.
- n. Using Walker County network and electronic communications equipment or software not owned, licensed or leased by Walker County.
- o. Encrypting/Encoding any electronic message unless specifically authorized, is strictly prohibited.
- p. Downloading or video streaming of any of the above is prohibited in this Policy.

RESTRICTED USES

11. The following list contains subject matter that may be related to legal matters, sensitive Walker County information, have monetary repercussions, or may possibly damage Walker County network and electronic communications equipment. Consequently, the authorizations to use or perform tasks related to the list are restricted. This will ensure that the integrity and protection of Walker County network and electronic communications equipment are maintained to a high degree.

- a. Using hardware related computer equipment and software not owned or purchased by Walker County for electronic communication, unless approved by IT Manager prior to use.
- b. IT Manager, Department heads (and or their designee), have the authority to inspect the contents of any departmental equipment, files, calendars or electronic mail of their subordinates in the normal course of their oversight responsibilities.
- c. Encrypting/Encoding any electronic message is authorized only at the direction of the Department Head. It is the responsibility of the Department Head to deposit the encryption key or code with the LAN administrator prior to encrypting or encoding any messages.
- d. In accordance with the Texas Local Government Code and the Texas Public Information Act (Open Records Act), only the County Judge and Elected Officials are authorized to release official Walker County Records. Requests for Public Information **must** be in writing. The release of Walker County Records using network and electronic communications equipment are governed by the Directives and Laws set forth within the Texas Local Government Code and the Texas Public Information Act. When in doubt about the sensitivity of a document, and or releasing methodology, consultation with the Walker County Attorney is strongly recommended.

OPERATING AND USE OF NETWORK COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT

PRIVACY

12. Employees should be aware that they have no expectation of privacy in the network and electronic communications system made available to them. Their electronic communications may be may be read by others for a variety of valid reasons. Although this statement is true of many other types of County correspondence, the nature of network and electronic communications can lead one to forget, or possibly ignore the fact that electronic communications (encrypted or not) should not be considered as the private property of the sender/recipient. Passwords are the property of Walker County and as such, the use of passwords for security purposes does not guarantee confidentiality or any personal privacy right. All passwords must be provided to the Departmental Head (and or their designee).

MESSAGE(S) STORAGE

13. The local storage of large numbers of electronic messages is strongly discouraged. Retention of messages fills up large amounts of storage space on the network server and can slow down performance. In addition, and because electronic messages can contain confidential information, it is desirable to limit the number, distribution, and availability of such messages. If the message requires saving per departmental instructions or as a public record, employees are requested to archive it within a week of receipt.

UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS

14. All **suspected** and **actual** intrusions by unauthorized persons or employees are to be reported immediately to the Department Head and the IT Manager.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

15. Texas Law requires that all employees protect the integrity of the County's confidential information. This includes citizens confidential information held by the County. If you are unsure whether the information is confidential, consult the County Attorney through your Department Head. Confidential information should never be transmitted or forwarded to other employees inside the County that do not have **the need to know**. To reduce the chance that confidential information may inadvertently be sent to the wrong person, avoid the use of distribution lists. Further, when sending such information make sure that any lists used, are current. If a distribution list must be used, review each name in the list of recipients prior to transmission. Electronic messages that contain confidential information should have a confidentiality legend in all capital letters at the top of the message in a form similar the following:

**"THIS MESSAGE CONTAINS CONFIDENTIAL
INFORMATION OF WALKER COUNTY
UNAUTHORIZED USE OR DISCLOSURE IS PROHIBITED."**

Since copies of electronic communications may be placed on back-up or other systems you do not control, you should keep in mind that network communication systems may be **inappropriate** to communicate certain types of confidential information. It should be understood that in certain situations, information may be accessed by information systems personnel, or in a worst case scenario, others who do not have a need to know the information. To minimize inadvertent disclosures, messages should not be left visible on the monitor when a user is away from his/her computer. The use of Screen Savers provides an effective method to control an unattended monitor. Finally, network communication system passwords should be routinely changed.

COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT

16. The ability to scan, read, fax or otherwise attach a document to a Computer or other electronic communications equipment for distribution, greatly enhances the risk of copyright infringement. Consequently, Walker County employees and/or Walker County can and may be held liable for unauthorized copying and distribution of copyrighted material through network communication equipment and systems. Consequently, employees should not copy and/or distribute copyrighted material such as software, database files, documentation, articles, graphics files, to include down-loaded information, without confirming in advance that Walker County has the right to copy or distribute such material. Any questions concerning these rights should be directed to the Director of Data Processing or the County Attorney.

WALKER COUNTY HOME PAGE/INTERNET/PRIVATE INTERNET & E-MAIL ACCOUNTS

WALKER COUNTY HOME PAGE

17. A Walker County web site and associated home pages will be established to improve the quality, productivity, and general cost effectiveness of the County's workforce, as well as greatly enhance communications between the Public and Walker County. The quality of the layout, categories of information on the home pages and subsequent web pages will be at the direction of the IT Manager. The timeliness of information contained in the site will be at the direction of the Department Head/Elected Official. The Walker County Home Page will link County Departments and other internet resources to provide readily available information to all users. All proposed Home Pages and associated web pages will be professional in appearance, current and contain accurate information, while emphasizing information that is important to Walker County citizens. Further, Home Pages will contain minimal high resolution graphics, and require minimal conveyance between Home and associated Web pages. All Web pages to include design, layout and content must be approved by the Walker County IT Committee.

INTERNET/INTRANET

18. Workstations having Internet Capabilities will be at the discretion of the Department Heads/Elected Officials. Walker County employees should know that the County's Internet service provider and IT Department can and may monitor access and usage and has the ability to identify at least and often the specific individual through a County identifiable electronic signature. The Internet can leave "tracks" even if an employee is reviewing a location, without downloading or posting a message. Department Heads should ensure that their employees are aware that transmitting any information, whether by e-mail or as an enclosure, potentially exposes such information to third parties. Therefore, employees should not send any confidential information over the Internet.

PRIVATE INTERNET/E-MAIL ACCOUNTS

19. In the normal performance of everyday County duties, it is preferred that Walker County employees use the Internet and e-mail services provided by Walker County. However, it is also understood that there may be certain circumstances where an employee will use their private Internet and/or e-mail service. The provisions of this policy will apply to all individuals using personally owned equipment and personal Internet accounts on County premises.

INTERNET CHARGES

20. In the event an employee incurs charges through the Internet, and the incurred charges are **not** for Walker County business purposes, it will be that employee's responsibility to reimburse Walker County for all incurred charges. The reimbursement will take place through payroll deduction. Further, in the event of a dispute between the Department Head and the employee as to how the charges were incurred, the Commissioners' Court will make the final determination.

REPORTING VIOLATIONS

21. All restricted and unauthorized uses shall be reported to the Department Head/Elected Official.

SOCIAL MEDIA

22. Employees shall refrain from participating in social media while on duty, and/or on Walker County provided electronic equipment, except in limited situations where such activity is authorized work related activities. Unauthorized social media activity conducted while on-duty on County provided electronic equipment is a violation of this policy. Employees are also prohibited from using a County email address to register on social networks, blogs or other online promotions or tools utilized for personal use. Walker County recognizes that employees may participate in social media activities while off-duty; however, employees should ensure that their off-duty social media activity does not interfere with their employment or their workplace relationships.

Employees should not post information, photographs, video, or audio of co-workers, clients, customers and vendors of the County without first obtaining their approval. Posting information regarding a co-worker's work performance, medical information or personal relationships could cause conflict in the workplace and is prohibited. It is prohibited to post false information about co-workers, clients, customers and vendors of the County. While such activity may be off-duty, it may affect the workplace and could be a violation of County policies.

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

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

Any violation of this policy, including activity which occurs outside the workplace, is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

NETWORK AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT(S)

23. Electronic Scanning Devices, Computers and Computer Systems, Printers, Recording devices, Wireless Bridges, email, text and other communications equipment are all examples of Network Communications equipment.

NETWORK AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM(S)

24. Is any system(s) that can transmit, receive, store electronic signals (voice, video, data, (analog and digital) by means of radio wave propagation, cable, or optical transmission. Network and electronic Communications Systems have the capacity to store the voice, video, data, (analog and digital) on magnetic tape, vinyl, or other solid state devices.

INTERNET/WORLD WIDE WEB

25. The World Wide computer network used for reference, e-mail and other services. It is primarily used as a communications tool.

INTRANET

26. For internal Walker County purposes, the Intranet is defined as a communication tool. It is used by employees of Walker County and its departments to obtain business information, work related reference material, and messages, which are transmitted and received electronically on personal computers within the Walker County offices.

VOICE MAIL

27. Is an electronic communication system in which spoken messages are recorded or digitized for later playback by the intended recipient.

E-MAIL AND TEXT

28. Electronic mail (e-mail) and text messages are messages transmitted and received electronically between computer workstations and personal communication devices.

HOME PAGE

29. Is an introductory page (table of contents) of an organization. The Home Page usually provides opening statements and instructions about the visited site. In addition, a typical Home Page will link to other resources within the organization, and quite possibly other Web sites. The Walker County Home Page will be that page assigned www.co.walker.tx.us.

WEB PAGE

30. Is a place allocated to the Internet/World Wide Web that contains information and has a unique Internet World Wide Web address.

SOCIAL MEDIA

31. The interaction among people in which they create, share or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 7/22/02 EFFECTIVE 7/22/02 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 6/1/15

Walker County Personnel Policy Manual

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9.02 SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATIONS AND SERVICES PROHIBITED ON COUNTY DEVICES

Walker County prohibits the installation or use of the social media service TikTok or any other successor application or service developed or provided by ByteDance Limited or an entity owned by ByteDance Limited; or a social media application or service specified by proclamation of the governor on any device owned or leased by Walker County and requires the removal of covered applications from those devices.

The installation and use of a covered application may be acceptable to the extent necessary for providing law enforcement; or developing or implementing information security measures. In order for the installation to be approved Walker County must require the use of measures to mitigate risks posed to this state during the use of the covered application, and the documentation of those measures.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT ON 7/31/2023

10.01 POLICY ON PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

As a part of the annual budget process, the Commissioners' Court reviews and adopts personnel allocations and the amounts budgeted for each position at the County for all employees other than those set by alternate processes in statute.

Any requests for changes to the adopted personnel allocations and budget requires a formal budget amendment adopted by Commissioners' Court. Elected Officials/Department Heads have discretion in setting the salary for each position up to the budgeted salary amount for that position. A position that is currently paid above market-rate will be reduced to the market-rate when the position becomes vacant.

OBJECTIVE

1. To provide Walker County with a personnel management program that fulfills the following objectives: internal equity, external competitiveness, compliance with laws and regulations, rewards employees based on degree of performance, and administrative efficiency.

INTERNAL EQUITY

2. The concept of equity is related to fairness and consistency. Decisions concerning compensation can affect all departments. The County is a single entity, and a unified pay system will help minimize problems.

EXTERNAL COMPETITIVENESS

3. External equity affects morale when employees discuss their compensation/benefits with friends and neighbors who have similar jobs. The four principal considerations of job content are skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions.

Jobs requiring more skills are recognized as deserving higher compensation. The amount of physical and mental effort required, the amount of responsibility, and the type of working conditions are also considered.

In summary, differing job content, differing length of service and experience, and differing job performance all contribute to the pay system.

FORMALIZED HIRING PROCESS

4. All job vacancies must be posted at the courthouse and on the county website by Human Resources. After a selection is made the applicant will be notified and they must complete any required testing necessary for that position. Once results are received, Human Resources will notify the department that the employee can be hired.

After selection of the employee to be hired, the department head/elected official shall complete a standardized Employee Status Change Form and forward the completed form to the Human Resources Department along with a copy of the completed application.

The **department head/elected official shall not allow the employee to begin work** until the employment process is completed by the Human Resources Department and budget compliance is verified.

A copy of a current job description must be on file in the Human Resources Department.

Verification of budget compliance is the responsibility of the County Auditor.

At a minimum the standardized form must contain in addition to the persons' name, address, etc., the job title of the employee; rate of pay, and full time or part time status.

If part time, hours budgeted for the position must be indicated on the form.

A standardized form will be developed by the Human Resources Department and County Auditor.

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All changes to the rate of pay and/or job classification must be submitted on the standardized Employee Status Change Form.

After budget availability is verified, a signed form will be returned to the department head/elected official. It is recommended that the employee be notified only after the final approval.

REWARDING PERFORMANCE

5. To encourage higher levels of motivation, effort, and productivity to the extent practicable, elected officials and department heads should have the flexibility to manage their departments and staff. In addition, they must work within the approved budget and establish guidelines to reward employees for outstanding performance.

ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY

6. As the County has limited resources, it is not the intent to spend excessive time and resources in administration of the personnel management system. The goal is to keep the paperwork to a minimum and the system simple and flexible while obtaining the objectives. Proposed revisions to the Personnel Management Procedures shall be submitted to the Personnel Management Committee for evaluation and approval, and then submitted to Commissioners' Court for final approval.

BUDGETED FUNDS

7. Budgeted funds shall include all funds necessary to fund all budgeted positions at the greater of the mid-range of the group for positions or at the current salary of the employee in a position in his/her group for a fiscal year. Upon a position becoming vacant a budget amendment will be presented to Commissioners' Court to move the budget to mid-range. An exception was made in the salary plan implementation to see that no employee received a pay decrease. Each budget year Commissioners' Court shall set the pay for each position as part of the budget process.

DEMOTIONS

8. A demotion is defined as the movement of an employee from a higher pay group to a lower pay group as a result of:

- a. the inability of an employee to fulfill the functions of a position,
- b. the employee's request for such change, or
- c. disciplinary action.

NEWLY HIRED EMPLOYEE

9. A newly hired employee is an individual who has not been employed by the County within the last 730 days. A newly hired employee will be compensated in accordance with the Personnel Management Procedures. The salary of an employee must fall within the minimum and mid-range of the pay group for their budgeted position. An employee may be hired and paid below the minimum for a period not to exceed two years. The difference between the amount paid to the employee during this period and the budgeted salary for the position does not create unallocated reserves. If the Department Head sees a need to permanently reduce the position to a lower pay grade, a job description with the revised duties and requirements should be prepared and a request for changes to the personnel allocation budget presented to Commissioners' Court for approval.

PROMOTIONS

10. A promotion is the advancement of an employee from a lower pay group to a higher pay group within the department.

It is the County's policy to give qualified employees advancement opportunities whenever possible. An employee receiving a promotion will be compensated in accordance with the Personnel Management Procedures. The salary may not fall below the minimum or above the mid-range of the pay group without an approved budget amendment by Commissioners' Court.

An employee who is promoted to a higher pay group must satisfactorily demonstrate his/her ability to perform the duties of the new position. The immediate supervisor should periodically advise the employee of his/her progress and make a reasonable effort to ensure that the employee receives any

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necessary training to successfully perform the job duties. The supervisor may evaluate the employee's performance immediately preceding the completion of six months. Failure of the employee to perform satisfactorily at the promoted position may result in demotion or termination.

RECLASSIFICATION

11. Reclassification is a significant change in job duties, including responsibilities, level of knowledge, and accountability.

Since job group assignments are correlated to other groups and similar jobs, changes in job duties may or may not fall below the minimum or above the mid-range of the pay group without an approved budget amendment by the Commissioners' Court.

A reclassified employee will be compensated in accordance with the Personnel Management Procedures. The salary may not fall below the minimum or above the mid-range of the pay group without an approved budget amendment by the Commissioners' Court.

RE-HIRED EMPLOYEE

12. A re-hired employee is an employee who has terminated previous employment with the County and has been re-hired within 730 days to the previous termination date. A re-hired employee will be compensated in accordance with the Personnel Management Procedures. The salary may not fall below the minimum or above the mid-range of the pay group without an approved budget amendment by the Commissioners' Court.

TEMPORARY EMPLOYEE

13. Temporary employees do not qualify for sick leave accrual, vacation accrual, holiday leave, retirement system status, or health insurance.

See Walker County Policy on Employee Status 2.02 for the definition of a Temporary employee and benefit eligibility. Provisions for:

If a department cannot function properly without a full staff, the department head can fill a position with a temporary full or part time position at such time as:

- a. A Regular employee is unable to work due to an injury and has filed a Workers Compensation Claim – the regular employee is being full compensated by Workers Compensation Insurance (usually one week after the claim is filed).
- b. A Regular employee out on Family Medical Leave or Military Family Leave (See Policy 3.11) – the regular employee runs out of leave balances and is no longer being paid out of budgeted funds.

Procedures:

- a. Written request must be made to the County Judge for a personnel Budget Amendment to be made to set up the Temporary position. The Amendment must be approved by Commissioners' Court and be made part of the minutes in order to create a record of the temporary replacement.
- b. An Employee Change Status Form must be submitted to Payroll that includes who will be employed temporarily and the rate of pay requested.

REORGANIZATION

14. Reorganization is a significant change in the staffing patterns determined necessary by the Elected/Appointed official in a County office/department. Any reorganization determined necessary by the department head should be within the approved personnel budget and comply with the personnel management policies. Reorganization of the staffing of a department shall be submitted to the County Judge or Personnel Management Committee for preliminary approval, and then to Commissioners' Court will make the final determination of the amendment to the budget.

SALARY

15. Employee salary figures are based solely on funds budgeted by the Commissioners' Court. Funds that are designated or appropriated to a department head through acts of the Legislature of the State of Texas or other special revenue funds are not included in the calculation of an employee's salary in terms of the Personnel Management Procedures and the County's salary groups.

TRANSFERRED EMPLOYEE

16. **INTERDEPARTMENTAL** – An interdepartmental transfer is defined as the movement of an employee to a position in another department that is in the same, higher or lower pay group as the employee's previous position. A transferred employee will be compensated in accordance with the provisions on Compensation within this policy. The salary may not fall below the minimum or above the maximum of the pay group.

LATERAL – A lateral transfer is defined as the movement of an employee within a department to a position that has the same pay group as the employee's previous position.

Employees may not transfer between departments before 90 days from their hire date with that department, unless approved by both department heads.

COMPENSATION

17. All newly hired, re-hired, promoted, reclassified, reorganized, demoted, and transferred employees will be placed in the salary range of their appropriate group. The beginning salary for the employee shall be determined by several factors, including employee qualifications, education, job-related experience, and the salary of other County employees in similar positions with similar qualifications and experience, and available budgeted personnel funds. A portion of the beginning salary may be deferred at the election of the elected official/department head until a satisfactory training and evaluation period has passed as determined by the elected official department head (this election must be noted on the Employee Change Status Form that is approved).

Beginning salary may not be greater than the available budgeted funds for a position without a Commissioners' Court approved budget amendment. In all cases, budgeted personnel funds must be available and confirmed with the County Auditor's Office prior to hiring and compliance with the Compensation provisions in this Policy prior to hiring (requiring an approved Employee Change Status Form).

The department head may fill an open position in a lower pay group. The budgeted position shall remain in place at budget for that position as adopted by Court. At no time shall the total number of full-time personnel exceed the total number of full-time budgeted positions.

The required paperwork for all adjustments must be submitted to Payroll and the County Auditor's Office.

Determination and approval of an applicant's starting rate above the minimum is based on the applicant's level of experience and education, and the degree to which the applicant exceeds the minimum requirements for the position.

Employees may be eligible to receive a salary increase in accordance with the County personnel management policies provided that the funds are available.

During the budget process, Commissioners' Court determines the type of allocation, percentage or fixed amount, and the amount of funds available for salary increases for each department.

PERSONNEL BUDGET

18. Budgeted personnel funds may not be transferred to any other expenditure category in the department's budget. Changes in personnel needs and available funds will be addressed during the budget process.

Employee Turnover – It is Walker County's policy that employees receive payment for certain leave balances upon termination. This expense is considered to be personnel expenditure from budgeted personnel funds. The accumulated leave balances of a terminated employee shall be paid from remaining personnel funds budgeted for that employee's position.

Any shortage of personnel funds due to the payment of leave balances will result in leaving the position open until such time as the position's budgeted funds will meet or exceed a new employee's salary. When an employee's termination results in leave balance payments that will cross fiscal years, budgeted personnel funds for the new fiscal year will be adjusted accordingly.

Any variation from this procedure must receive prior approval from Commissioners' Court.

ACCRUAL OF COMP TIME

19. Comp time is to be managed to allow for necessary flex time in meeting department work load demands. Department heads/elected officials shall minimize to the greatest extent possible, the buildup of the comp time by an employee. Employees should be encouraged to take comp time. If a department head determines that comp time cannot be reasonably taken by the employee and will continue to accrue, a department head/elected official may request Commissioners' Court to allow the department to pay the employee overtime rather than allow the employee to accrue comp time.

VERIFICATION OF AVAILABLE BUDGETED FUNDS FOR OVERTIME PAY

20. Verification that the money is in the budget **MUST** take place prior to allowing the employee to work **paid** overtime. Verification of the availability of funds must be received from the County Auditor. A department head/elected official shall not allow an employee that receives comp time in lieu of overtime pay to work overtime if the employee is at the comp time max unless there are monies available in the budget to pay the overtime.

RECLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE

24. The County Judge or Personnel Management Committee, if created, shall review requests for new position titles and salary groups or requests to change a current position's salary group. Recommendations approved by the County Judge or Personnel Management Committee will be submitted to Commissioner's Court for consideration during the upcoming budget process.

RECLASSIFICATION REQUESTS

25. Reclassification requests shall be submitted to the County Judge by the last working day of April.

All requests for reclassification consideration should be a result of business necessity without consideration of the performance or merit of the incumbent in the position at the time of the request.

Employees who occupy a position that is being reclassified will be subject to meeting the minimum qualifications of the new job classification in order to remain in the position.

An employee who is an incumbent in a position that is reclassified into a lower or higher pay group shall be compensated in accordance with the Personnel Management Procedures.

Reclassification recommendations from the County Judge or Personnel Management Committee will be subject to Commissioners' Court approval during the normal budget procedure for the following fiscal year.

REORGANIZATION SCHEDULE

26. The County Judge or the Personnel Management Committee, at the request of the elected official/department head, will review all requests for reorganization of the staffing needs of a particular department. Recommendations for reorganization approved by the County Judge or Personnel Management Committee will be submitted to Commissioners' Court for final approval and implementation.

All requests for reorganization should be a result of business necessity as determined by the department head.

Employees who are employed in a department that is being reorganized will be compensated in accordance with the Personnel Management Procedures.

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PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

27. A Personnel Management Committee may be appointed by the County Judge at the beginning of each fiscal year. The committee will include 7 members that serve on either one- or two-year rotations with the County Judge and Treasurer as non-rotating members.

The County Judge will serve as Chairperson and vote only to break a tie vote. A member of the Personnel Management Committee may appoint a named designee to represent the member if two-thirds of the Personnel Management Committee votes to approve the appointment.

To approve a recommendation to Commissioners' Court a majority vote is required. Any elected official/department head or designee serving as a committee member shall abstain from voting on any item(s) directly affecting that elected official/department head's office.

The County Judge may call a meeting as needed to consider requested changes to the Personnel Management Procedures and any other salary administration items.

LICENSE AND CERTIFICATIONS

28. Walker County has positions that require licenses and certifications. It is the responsibility of each employee to maintain all required licenses and certifications. If an employee is unable to renew or loses a license or certification, they must immediately notify their supervisor. If this license is a requirement for the position, the employee may be demoted, transferred or terminated. Under no circumstances will the employee be allowed to continue in the position where a license or certification is required if failure to have such license or certification is illegal under either Federal or State Law.

CONFIDENTIALITY

29. Walker County is a public entity; however, some county employees acquire confidential (confidential, non-public) information as a result of their position with the county. This information must be protected. Employees who reveal confidential (confidential, non-public) information they have received as a result of their position may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Most information in an employee's personnel file including salary and job evaluations is subject to disclosure under the Public Information Act; however, highly personal matters are typically not subject to disclosure. The County will adhere to the Public Information Act requirements.

POLICY APPROVED AND ADOPTED BY: COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

DATE: 5/27/03 EFFECTIVE 5/27/03 Amended 2/13/06 Amended 9/18/06 Amended 3/17/08
Amended 8/11/08 Amended 12/08/08 Amended 5/10/10 Amended 6/1/15 Amended 9/26/22