ATASCOSA COUNTY EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Revision 10/26/2026

ATASCOSA COUNTY EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have received a copy of the Atascosa County Employee Handbook that outlines my benefits and obligations as a county employee. I understand that I am responsible for reading and familiarizing myself with the information in this handbook and understand that it contains general personnel policies of the County. If I need clarification on any of the information in this handbook, I will contact my immediate supervisor.

I further understand that the Atascosa County Employee Handbook is not a contract of employment. I understand that I am an at-will employee and either the County or I may terminate my employment at any time, with or without cause, and with or without notice.

I understand that this employee handbook is intended to provide guidance in understanding Atascosa County's policies, practices and benefits. I understand that Atascosa County retains the right to change this handbook at any time, and to modify or cancel any of its employee benefits when the need for change is recognized.

I understand as a County employee, I shall have no expectation of privacy when using county computers, networks, or other county owned equipment. Improper use may result in discipline up to and including termination.

I further understand that as an Atascosa County employee, I am expected to provide quality service to the public; to work towards the highest degree of safety possible for my fellow workers', to continually make suggestions for improvements, and to display a spirit of teamwork and cooperation.

I understand that I will 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, depending on the nature of my employment and position with the County.

I understand that I may be subject to reasonable suspicion or post-accident drug and alcohol testing. If I have a safety sensitive position or if I am required to have a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) for my county position, I will be subject to random, reasonable suspicion, post-accident and follow-up drug and alcohol testing.

I have read these policies and understand these policies and I agree to abide by and adhere to these policies. I understand that violation of these policies may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

_____

Printed Name of Employee

_____

Signature of Employee Date Signed

ATASCOSA COUNTY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

Overview

This document outlines the acceptable use of Atascosa County (the "County") devices. The rules in this Policy are in place to protect County employees and County information systems. Inappropriate use exposes County information systems to risks including malicious software, compromise of network systems and services, and legal issues.

Scope

All authorized users are bound by this Acceptable Use Policy.

Policies

Unacceptable Use

The following activities are, in general, prohibited. County employees may be exempted from certain restrictions in the course of their legitimate job responsibilities.

Under no circumstances is any individual utilizing Atascosa County information systems authorized to engage in any activity that is illegal under local, state, federal or international law.

The list of activities that follows is not exhaustive but rather serves to provide a framework for activities which fall into the category of unacceptable use.

The following activities are strictly prohibited, with no exceptions:

1. Violations of the rights of intellectual property, including, but not limited to, the installation or distribution of software products that are not appropriately licensed for use by Atascosa County

2. Unauthorized use of copyrighted material for which Atascosa County or the end user does not have an active license

3. Accessing user accounts, data, or information systems, for any purpose other than conducting county business, even if the user has authorized access,

4. Purposeful introduction of malicious programs into the County network or on information systems (e.g., viruses, worms, trojans, etc.)

5. Revealing your account password to others or allowing use of your account by others

6. Using an information system to actively engage in activities in violation of sexual harassment or hostile workplace laws

7. Purposefully effecting security breaches or disruptions of network communication

8. Unauthorized port scanning or security scanning unless expressly permitted

9. Intercepting data not intended for the employee's host unless this activity is a part of the employee's normal job

10. Circumventing user authentication or security of any information system

11. Introducing honeypots, or similar technology on the network

12. Using any program/script/command, or sending messages of any kind, with the intent to interfere with, disable, or deny a user's access to an information system, via any means, locally or otherwise

13. Any form of computerized gambling

14. Altering the operation systems (i.e., jailbreaking) of County-issued devices

15. Installation of unauthorized remote desktop software (e.g., TeamViewer)

16. Browsing non-business-related websites on the County network

Information Storage and Transmission

Sensitive information (i.e., PHI and PII) should be stored only on the County drives. Sensitive information may not be stored on computer hard drives without encryption, nor may it be transmitted to parties outside the County network in any manner, including email, fax, text messages, or voicemail without appropriate security controls.

Controls should include encryption of messages and authentication of recipients (e.g., password protection of files; verification of fax numbers; cover sheets; marking documents as confidential).

Email

Only County-provided email accounts shall be used to conduct Atascosa County business. County-provided email accounts should not be used to send or receive non-business-related emails. As custodians of resources entrusted to them by the public, employees should be mindful of how to most appropriately utilize these resources to perform their duties. Use of third-party email services (such as Gmail or Yahoo), including the auto-forwarding of Atascosa County email to outside email services to conduct County business is prohibited.

County Virtual Private Network (VPN)

County VPN is not to be used on non-County devices. Third-party VPN usage is strictly prohibited.

User Accounts

Employees are responsible for safeguarding their system access login and password credentials and must comply with the password parameters and standards identified in the County

password policy. Passwords should not be shared, nor should they be provided to anyone, including system administrators.

Accounts inactive for 21 days will be reviewed to possibly be disabled. Accounts inactive for 90 days will be disabled.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)

BYOD devices are not allowed on the County network and are not to be used to host, access, or in any way come in contact with County data and systems.

BYOD devices are allowed to access the County guest network but should not be plugged into any County-owned device. Atascosa County does not provide IT support on these devices.

Mobile Storage Devices

Mobile storage devices are any detachable device that can store data. Personally owned mobile storage devices are prohibited. Approved mobile storage devices can be issued and purchased by the County.

Mobile storage devices must meet compliance with County security policies. Any devices not approved by County, not in compliance, or are found to represent any threat to the County network or data will not be allowed to connect to a County device or the network.

Related Standards, Policies, and Processes

- County Password Policy
- Information Security Policy
- Removable Media Policy

_____ _____

SIGNATURE OF EMPLOYEE DATE

E-MAIL, INTERNET, AND VOICE-MAIL EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I understand that electronic communications systems and the information transmitted by, received from, or stored in these systems belong to the County of Atascosa. Furthermore, I understand that these systems are for use solely for work purposes and not for personal purposes, and that I have no expectation of privacy in connection with the use of this equipment or with the transmission, receipt, or storage of information in this equipment. I agree not to use a password, code, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication unless authorized. I understand and consent to monitoring my use of this equipment at any time at the discretion of the County. Such monitoring may include printing or reading e-mails in these systems, tracking the Internet sites I visit, and listening to my voice-mail messages.

_____ _____

SIGNATURE OF EMPLOYEE DATE

RETURN OF COUNTY PROPERTY

Upon termination of my employment with the County of Atascosa, I agree to return any county property in my possession and acknowledge that failure to do so may result in legal action by the County against me and/or deduction of the value of unreturned county property from my last paycheck.

_____ _____

SIGNATURE OF EMPLOYEE DATE

COUNTY OF ATASCOSA COMMISSIONERS' COURT ORDER NO. _____

WHEREAS the Atascosa County Commissioners Court desires to provide the employees of Atascosa County with a uniform format for dealing with various employment related issues;

WHEREAS the Atascosa County Commissioners' Court wish to adequately communicate to employees the policies and procedures of the County;

WHEREAS the following policies are not a contract, nor are they to be considered to constitute contractual obligations of any kind or a contract of employment between the County of Atascosa and any of its employees;

WHEREAS these provisions have been developed at the discretion of Commissioners' Court and except for the policy of employment-at-will may be amended or cancelled at any time at Commissioners' Court's sole discretion. Any deletions, amendments, revisions, or additions to the policies must be approved by the Commissioners' Court;

WHEREAS these policies have been adopted to promote consistent, equitable, and effective practices by both employees and supervisors that will result in quality public service to the citizens of Atascosa County; and

WHEREAS these policies completely replace and supersede any and all personnel policies previously adopted, individually or as a set of policies, by Commissioners' Court. In addition to these personnel policies, elected officials and department heads may establish departmental rules and regulations that relate specifically to their departments. Departmental rules are Important, and employees must comply with them. If there is a conflict between a departmental rule or policy and these policies or any future amendments to these policies, the terms of these policies, as amended, will prevail.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Atascosa County Commissioners' Cou□ereby □e.roV\s!□nd adopts, the ATASCOSA COUNTY EMPLOY□ANDBOOK to be effective on □\1.Y\R,,@c e{J□s-

ADOPTE□ DAY OF . :\y./1€. ,20a.5

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Commissioner Pct. 3

Commissioner Pct. 2

ABOUT ATASCOSA COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Atascosa County's government organization is established by the Constitution of the State of Texas and by state statutes. Operations are governed by state and federal law and by actions of the Commissioners' Court.

COMMISSIONERS' COURT

The Commissioners' Court consists of four (4) County Commissioners, each elected by the voters of a Commissioner's Precinct, and the County Judge, elected by all the voters of the County. Officials are elected for a four-year term of public service.

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

- Sets salary for elected officials, department heads, and employees
- Sets the tax rate
- Adopt the annual budget
- Approves new programs or changes existing ones
- Adopt regulations and policies
- Approves and manages County facilities.

The Commissioners' Court carries out these and other specific duties by meeting in regular and special sessions. Sessions are held on the second and fourth Monday of each month. Decisions of the Court require a majority vote.

COUNTY OPERATIONS

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

INDEPENDENT ELECTED OFFICIALS

While the Commissioners' Court has a wider range of authority, in some areas state law gives greater authority to other elected officials. These elected officials are directly responsible to the voters for performing the duties assigned to their offices.

Service to the Public

On a day-to-day basis, citizens base their opinion of Atascosa County on the actions of county employees, department heads, and elected officials. Over the years, we have developed a code of conduct that is expected by all employees to maintain a reputation for good county governance. The following are the responsibilities of all employees:

Code of Conduct:

A. **Serve the public in an efficient and professional manner**
B. **Conduct yourself with integrity, honesty, fairness, and respect**
C. **Promote transparency, efficiency, and fiscal responsibility**
D. **Avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest**
E. **Maintain confidentiality as required by law and policies**
F. **Promote a workplace free from any form of harassment and discrimination**
G. **Be on time and ready to perform the duties of your position**
H. **Present yourself as clean, groomed and dress appropriately for your position**
I. **Conserve county money, time, and equipment**
J. **Carry out all position responsibilities efficiently**
K. **Maintain a good and positive moral conduct**

Atascosa County employees are prohibited from the following activities:

A. **Participating in decisions or votes where an employee has a substantial personal or financial interest (Local Government Code Chapter 171)**
B. **Using county property, funds, equipment, vehicles, or personnel for private or political reasons (Texas Penal Code § 39.02- Abuse of Official Capacity)**
C. **Soliciting, accepting, or agreeing to accept any bribe (Texas Penal Code § 36.02)**
D. **Engaging in political campaigning or partisan activities during work hours or by using county resources (Texas Election Code § 276.001)**
E. **Engaging in discrimination or harassment of any kind (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and Texas Labor Code Chapter 21)**
F. **Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information**
G. **Retaliation of any reason for acting in good faith**

SECTION 1: GENERAL POLICIES

A. COUNTY EMPLOYMENT

1A-1 EMPLOYMENT AT-WILL revised 4.27.26

All employment with Atascosa County shall be considered “at- will” employment. No contract of employment shall exist between any individual and Atascosa County for any duration, either specified or unspecified. No provision of this employee handbook shall be construed as modifying your employment at-will status.

Atascosa 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.

Atascosa County shall also have the right to change any condition, benefit, policy, or privilege of employment at any time, with or without notice. Employees of Atascosa County shall have the right to leave their employment with the County at any time, with or without notice.

All new, rehired, promoted, and transferring employees are placed on a 90-day probationary period. All employees, whether new or rehired, are subject to additional departmental probationary periods in conjunction with the County 90-day probationary period.

1A-2 PURPOSE

The following policies are not a contract, nor are they to be considered to constitute contractual obligations of any kind or a contract of employment between the County of Atascosa and any of its employees. These provisions have been developed at the discretion of Commissioners' Court and except for the policy of employment-at-will may be amended or cancelled at any time at Commissioners' Court's sole discretion. Any deletions, amendments, revisions, or additions to the policies must be approved by the Commissioners' Court. They have been adopted in order to promote consistent, equitable, and effective practices by both employees and supervisors that will result in quality public service to the citizens of Atascosa County.

These policies completely replace and supersede any and all personnel policies previously adopted, individually or as a set of policies, by Commissioners' Court. In addition to these personnel policies, elected officials and department heads may establish departmental rules and regulations that relate specifically to their departments. Departmental rules are important, and employees must comply with them. If there is a conflict between a departmental rule or policy and these policies or any future amendments to these policies, the terms of these policies, as amended, will prevail.

1A-3 DISSEMINATION OF PERSONNEL POLICIES

The County Clerk maintains the official set of personnel policies with all revisions for reference by employees. The Human Resources Department will provide a hard copy or an electronic copy of this manual and all subsequent revisions to each department head and elected official.

1A-4 EMPLOYEE STATUS

Each county position has an employee status that identifies how the position is paid and how benefits are granted by Commissioners Court. The status of a position cannot be changed without the approval of the Commissioners' Court. This policy defines both health insurance and retirement benefits. Full-time employees will be eligible for health insurance. All other classifications must be included in the county initial and/or standard measurement periods for the Affordable Care Act.

Regular Full Time: A full-time employee shall be any employee in a position who has a normal work schedule of 30 hours per week. Full time employees are eligible for county health insurance and retirement benefits. Other county policies will dictate eligibility for other benefits. Employees may be non-exempt, hourly employees, exempt hourly or exempt salary employees. Non-exempt employees are eligible for overtime compensation. Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime compensation. Atascosa County makes exempt status determination based on the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Regular Part Time: A part time employee shall be any employee in a position who has a normal work schedule of less than thirty (30) hours per week. All regular part-time employees must be placed on TCDRS retirement regardless of the number of hours worked per week. Other county policies will dictate eligibility for other benefits.

Temporary 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 internship and election workers. Seasonal employees can be either part-time or full-time, and they may qualify for health insurance through the county under the Affordable Care Act depending on the number of hours worked per week, and the length of employment. Temporary seasonal employees are not eligible for retirement benefits under TCDRS. Other county policies will dictate eligibility for other benefits.

Regular Variable Hour: 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 – hours are variable or indeterminate at the time of the employee's start date. If the employee works an average of thirty (30) or more hours a week in the measurement period, the employee will be eligible for health insurance through the county under the Affordable Care Act. If an employee's schedule becomes regular, then the employee shall be reclassified as full or part-time depending on the hours worked. Regular variable hour employees are eligible for retirement benefits under TCDRS. Other county policies will dictate eligibility for other benefits.

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 expected to last for a specific period of time or until a specific project is completed, but no longer than 12

months. If this project goes beyond 12 months, the employee will move into a regular part time status. Temporary short-term part-time employees are not entitled to any benefits under the Affordable Care Act and are also not eligible for retirement benefits under TCDRS. Other county policies will dictate eligibility for other benefits.

Temporary Full Time: A temporary short-term full-time employee shall be any employee who is expected to work for thirty (30) or more hours each week in a position that is expected to last for a specific period of time or until a specific program is completed, but no longer than 12 months. If this project goes beyond 12 months, the employee will move into a regular full-time status. Temporary short-term full-time employees are not eligible for retirement benefits under TCDRS. Temporary full-time employees will be eligible under the Affordable Care Act for county health benefits. Other county policies will dictate eligibility for other benefits.

1A-5 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Atascosa County is an equal opportunity employer. The county will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, including lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender status, age, genetic information, pregnancy, veteran status, disability, or any other condition or status protected by law in hiring, promotion, demotion, raises, termination, training, discipline, use of employee facilities or programs, or any other benefit, condition, or privilege of employment except where required by state or federal law or where a bona fide occupational qualification exists. If an employee needs an accommodation as a result of a condition or status protected by law, please advise your elected official, appointed official, department head, human resources or the county attorney.

1A-6 AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT AMENDMENTS ACT

It is the policy of Atascosa County to prohibit any harassment of, or discriminatory treatment of employees based on a disability or because an employee has requested a reasonable accommodation. If an employee feels they have been subject to such treatment, or has witnessed such treatment, the situation should be reported to your elected official, appointed official, department head, human resources or the county attorney. All elected officials, appointed officials, department heads and employees with responsibilities requiring knowledge are instructed to treat the employee's disability with confidentiality.

It is Atascosa County's policy to reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with disabilities unless the accommodation imposes an undue hardship on the county. 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. If you require accommodation, please contact human resources. Reasonable accommodation shall be determined through an interactive process of consultation.

1A-7 PREGNANT WORKERS FAIRNESS ACT

It is the policy of Atascosa County to prohibit any harassment of, or discriminatory treatment of employees based on known limitations related to, affected by, or arising out of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions or because an employee has requested a reasonable accommodation. If an employee feels they have been subject to such treatment, or has witnessed such treatment, the situation should be reported to your elected official, appointed official, department head, human resources or the county attorney. All elected officials, appointed officials, department heads, and employees with responsibilities requiring knowledge are instructed to treat the employee's limitation with confidentiality.

It is Atascosa County's policy to reasonably accommodate applicants and employees with known limitations related to, affected by, or arising out of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the county. If you require an accommodation, please contact human resources. Reasonable accommodation shall be determined through an interactive process of consultation.

1A-8 CHAIN OF COMMAND revised 10.26.26

Elected Officials are responsible to county voters. County employees are responsible to the appropriate Department Head or a supervisor designated by the Department Head. Directions regarding work to be done, expected results, the adequacy of work performance, and grievances will normally follow the chain of command.

Department Heads

For purposes of this policy, Department Heads are those specified and designated by Commissioners Court.

All Department Heads shall report to the County Judge or, in the County Judge's absence, the County Judge Pro Tempore, who shall serve as the point of contact. All communications shall be directed to the point of contact, with copies provided to the County Auditor and Human Resources.

Requests for leave or requests to close an office during normal working hours must be submitted to the point of contact, with copies provided to the County Auditor and Human Resources, **at least 2 business days before the requested leave or office closure begins, unless not feasibly possible**. The point of contact must acknowledge receipt and approve all requests before the leave or office closure occurs.

The County Judge is responsible for disciplinary action involving Department Heads, up to and including termination, subject to the approval requirement below. Any proposed termination of a Department Head must be brought before the entire Commissioners Court and approved by a majority vote.

1A-9 PERSONNEL FILES

The Atascosa County Human Resources department will retain basic employee information in an individual personnel file. This file will include all pertinent employment documents such as resume, application, transfers, as well as records concerning performance, discipline and compensation.

It is important that the personnel records of Atascosa County be accurate at all times. To avoid issues compromising your benefit eligibility, or having W2's returned, Atascosa County requests employees to promptly notify the appropriate personnel representative of any change in name, home and mailing address, telephone number, marital status, number of dependents, or of any other pertinent information.

The Public Information Act allows county employees to keep their home addresses, personal telephone numbers, social security numbers, emergency contact information, and information that reveals whether the employee has family members confidential. Employees may keep this information private by requesting in writing by completing the public information election form, not to allow this information to be released to the public no later than 14 days after their first day of employment.

1A-10 NEPOTISM

Texas Government Code Chapter 573, a Public Official of Atascosa County is prohibited from hiring a relative related within the third degree of consanguinity (blood) or within the second degree of affinity (marriage) to work in a department that they supervise or exercise control over. A degree of relationship is determined under Texas Government Code Chapter 573. (See the charts that follow.)

A Public Official or Supervisor shall not appoint, approve, recommend, promote, or otherwise take action with regard to the appointment, approval, recommendation, promotion or supervision of an employee or prospective employee related to the Public Official or Supervisor in the third degree of consanguinity (blood) or the second degree of affinity (marriage).

**See the Nepotism Charts following for a visual depiction of consanguinity and affinity.

EXCEPTION

Nepotism prohibition prescribed in this policy does not apply to an appointment, confirmation of an appointment, or vote for an appointment or confirmation of an appointment of an

individual to a position if:

A. the individual is employed in the position immediately before the election or appointment of the Public Official or Supervisor to whom the individual is related in as prohibited degree; and that prior employment of the individual is continuous for-
B. At least:
   a. thirty (30)-days, if the Public Official or Supervisor is appointed.
   b. six (6)-months, if the Public Official is elected in an election other than the general election for state and county officer, or
   c. one (1)-year, if the Public Official is elected in the general election for state and county officers.

If, under this exception, an individual continues in a position, the Public Official or Supervisor to whom the individual is related in a prohibited degree may not participate in any deliberation or voting on the appointment, reappointment, confirmation of the appointment or reappointment, employment, reemployment, change in status, compensation, or dismissal of the individual if that action applies only to the individual and is not taken regarding a bona fide class or category of employees.

DISCLOSURE RESPONSIBILITY

A Public Official or Supervisor shall immediately fully disclose to the County Judge the existence of any relationship that may violate this policy at the time of employment, or that develops at any time during employment.

PENALTIES

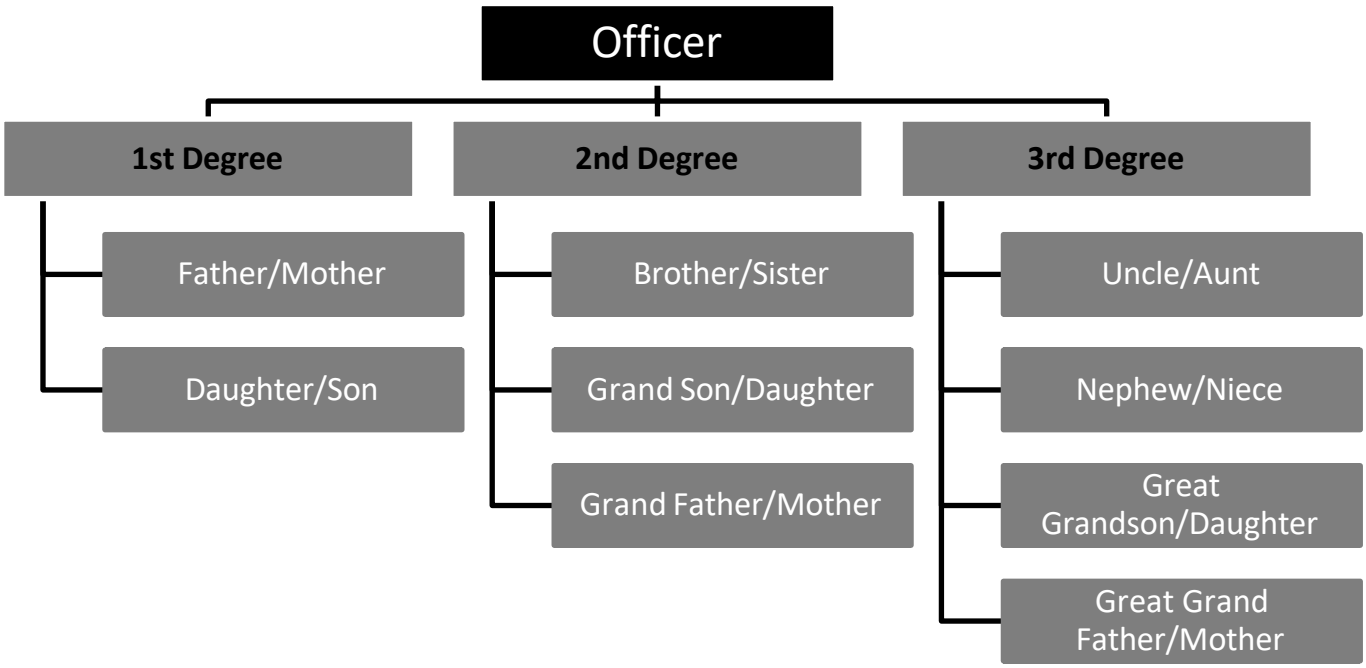
If a Public Official commits an offense involving misconduct under this Policy, the individual violates the Texas nepotism statutes codified in Texas Government Code, Chapter 573. An offense under this section is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine not less than $100 or more than $1,000.

Additionally, pursuant to Texas Government Code Chapter 573, Subchapter E, a Public Official who violates this policy shall be removed from the individual's position in accordance with the removal provisions of the Texas Constitution or the provisions codified in Chapter 573, Subchapter E.

A Supervisor who violates this Policy may be subject to disciplinary action, including termination.

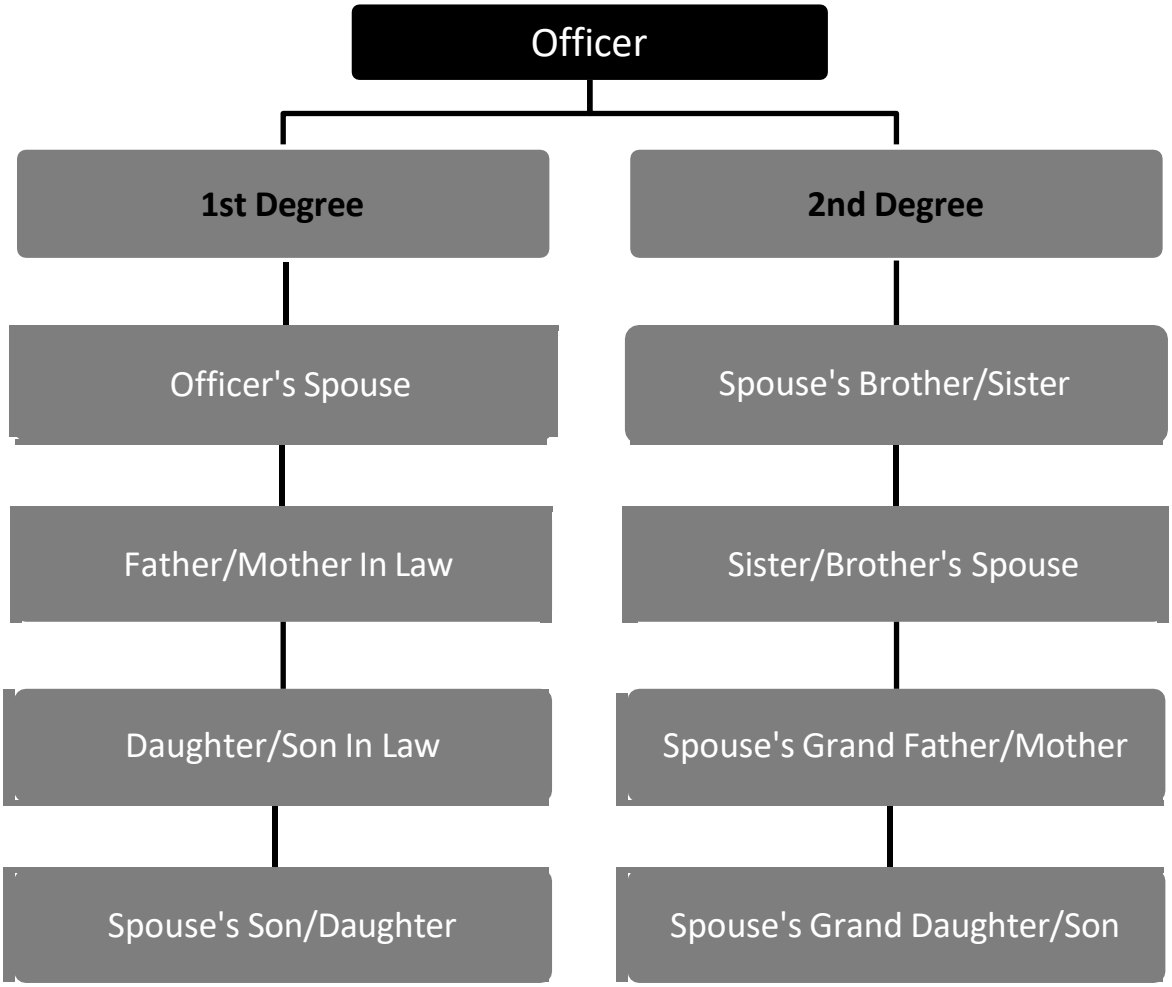
CONSANGUINITY KINSHIP CHART

(Relationship by Blood)



AFFINITY KINSHIP CHART

(Relationship by Marriage)



B. WORK RULES AND EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

1B-1 WORK/OFFICE HOURS

Normal working hours for most county offices are Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, with one (1) hour for lunch. Working hours total to forty (40) hours on a weekly basis. Department heads are responsible for advising their employees of the times their schedules will begin and end. At all times, staffing needs and operational demands may necessitate variations in starting and ending times. The Sheriff's Office, EMS, and Juvenile Detention Center personnel work varying shifts and should consult with their direct supervisors for their schedules. Elected officials may, within the limits of state and federal law, make adjustments to these work schedules. Break periods are permitted upon the approval of the department head or elected official. Morning and afternoon break of fifteen (15) minutes each may be authorized by each department. Time does not accrue if not taken. The Commissioners' Court encourages offices to remain open during the noon hour to better serve the public. Extension of breaks or lunch periods are not paid and employees are required to use leave time if they extend their break period or lunch hour. Failure to comply with the policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

1B-2 ATTENDANCE

As an Atascosa County employee, you are expected to be punctual and demonstrate consistent attendance.

Each employee shall report to work on each day they are scheduled to work at the starting time set by their supervisor unless prior approval for absence is given by the supervisor, or the employee is unable to report for work because of circumstances beyond the control of the employee. If an employee is unable to be at work at their normal reporting time, or if they will arrive more than 10 minutes after their scheduled start time, they shall be responsible for notifying their supervisor at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start of their shift or as soon as it is reasonably practicable in event of an emergency. Employees should consult with their supervisor for their department specific policy for attendance.

Each employee shall remain on the job until the normal end of schedule time established by the supervisor unless permission to leave early is given by the supervisor. Each supervisor is responsible for determining if an unscheduled absence or tardiness is to be classified as excused or unexcused, based on the circumstances causing the absence or tardiness. Excessive absenteeism is defined as four (4) or more unexcused absences in a thirty (30)- day period. Excessive tardiness or absenteeism is subject to disciplinary measures, up to and including termination of employment.

An employee who no-call no-shows for three (3) consecutive days may be considered to have resigned voluntarily by abandonment.

1B-3 DRESS CODE

Atascosa County expects all employees to be dressed professionally, in a clean and neat manner when reporting to work each day, failure to dress appropriately may result in the employee being sent home to change or sent home for the day without pay. Each official or department head will determine the type of attire that is acceptable based on the business needs of each department, taking into consideration state and federal legal protections.

1B-4 TOBACCO/SMOKE FREE WORKPLACE

Atascosa County endeavors to provide a healthy work environment. Therefore, any form of tobacco or vaping consumed in county buildings and county vehicles is strictly prohibited. Additionally, no smoking is allowed within ten (10) feet of the exterior entranceways or exits.

1B-5 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Employees of Atascosa County 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 the employee's job efficiency, or which would reduce their ability to make objective decisions in regard to their work and responsibility as an Atascosa County 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.

Activities which constitute a conflict of interest shall include but not be limited to:

1) 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 the intent to influence the employee's performance;
2) 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;
3) Accepting outside employment, compensation, gifts, or favors that might reasonably tend to impair independence of judgment in performance of duties for the County;
4) Making any personal investment that might reasonably be expected to create a substantial conflict between the employee's private interest and their duties for the County; or
5) 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.

1B-6 PURCHASING

It is the responsibility of the department head or elected official to make purchases only after obtaining a purchase order number and in compliance with county and state procurement policies and regulations. When making purchases, department heads are responsible for ensuring that the products being purchased are the best value, follow state purchasing law, and follow state and federal purchasing protocols. Purchases in violation of the conflict-of-interest policy is prohibited and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The Auditor's office is responsible for bidding procedures and should be consulted in the event any purchase is equal to or exceeds $50,000. All contracts must be presented to the County Attorney's office at least one (1)week to four (4) weeks in advance of the desired purchase date to all time for review and negotiations depending on the contract complexity and length.

Emergency purchases are authorized in extremely limited circumstances affecting the public health, safety, or welfare of the citizens of Atascosa County: (a) in the event of public calamity for the benefit of the County citizens or to protect public property; (b) in order to protect the public health or safety of County residents; or (c) when made necessary by unforeseen damage to public property.

Items considered sole source purchases include patented or copyrighted material, secret processes, natural monopolies, utility services, captive replacement parts, components for equipment, and films, manuscripts, or books. Such items may be purchased from a sole source without competitive bidding only after the department certifies the existence of only one source to the Commissioners' Court and enters a finding and sole source letter in the Court's minutes. (Local Government Code 262.024)

Personal consumption or convenience items cannot be purchased using county funds (ie. Coffee, creamer, drinks, snacks, cups, plates, plastic ware, etc. County funds cannot be used for purchasing decorations of any kind and articles of clothing (unless receiving a uniform allowance).

Employees receiving a travel allowance cannot use the county funds to purchase vehicle accessories. In the event that such items are purchased with county funds, the items must be returned to the county when the vehicle is disposed of or when the employee leaves county employment.

Failure to comply with this policy and the procedures set within state and federal procurement laws, the County Auditor's office and the County Attorney's office, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including, termination.

1B-7 SOLICITATION

In an effort to assure productivity in the workplace, persons not employed by Atascosa County are prohibited from soliciting or distributing literature in the workplace.

Atascosa County recognizes that employees have interests in events and organizations outside of the workplace. However, employees are prohibited from soliciting or distributing literature during workhours. The use of bulletin boards to post written solicitations is restricted unless approved by their department head or elected official. Bulletin boards are designated for displaying important information and should only be used for the following purposes:

A. EEO Statement
B. Employee Announcements
C. Workers' Compensation Insurance
D. Job Openings
E. Employee Rights
F. FMLA, ADA, and FLSA notice posters information

1B-8 NON-EMPLOYEE VISITORS OF ANY AGE AND PETS IN THE WORKPLACE revised 4.27.26

Atascosa County is a governmental entity supported by tax dollars and are held accountable to taxpayers, citizens, and voters. We are committed to conducting business in a professional manner with customer service being of utmost importance. To achieve this objective, County policy prohibits the presence of non-employee visitors of any age in the workplace for other than official county activities involving them. Employees with dependent children are expected to make regular arrangements for proper care of their children while they are at work.
This policy is established to avoid disruptions in the workplace and performance of job duties of the employee and co-workers, reduce personal and property liabilities, and promote a professional working environment.

A. Employees and supervisors must consider issues of safety, confidentiality, disruption of operation, disruption of services, disruption to other employees, appropriateness, and legal liability, as well as a sudden emergency, posed by the presence of non-employee visitors in the workplace. Therefore, County employees are prohibited from bringing non-employee visitors of any age to work.
B. It is the responsibility of Department Heads and supervisors to ensure that the work of the County is accomplished in an environment that promotes employee health and safety and minimizes work-related disruptions.
C. It is inappropriate to allow workplace visits by non-employee visitors of any age whether supervised or unsupervised.

D. Supervisors may grant a one-time exception for a temporary unforeseen emergency, other than illness of the child, but no parent, guardian; or relative can have a child in the workplace without the supervisor's permission or use the workplace as an alternative to childcare or for any other purpose. When authorized, the accompanying adult must always supervise the child.
E. Supervisors may direct an employee to remove a non-employee visitors of any agefrom the workplace. In this event, the employee will be charged with leave for any time that they are absent from their assigned station. Supervisors may make exceptions for holidays such as "Take your Child to Work Day."
F. Non-employee visitors of any age will not be allowed into an area that is potentially hazardous (i.e., where hazardous equipment, hazardous chemicals, or live animals, etc. are located); such prohibited areas include are but not limited to, workshops, storage buildings, power plants, and animal control facilities.
G. Non-employee visitors of any age exhibiting symptoms of potentially contagious illnesses should not be brought into the workplace. Provision for sick non-employee visitors of any age should be made within the context of various forms of leave available to employees.
H. Non-employee visitors of any age can not be left unaccompanied by an adult in the workplace, and any employee who brings a non-employee visitors of any age to work and leaves them unattended will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

In addition, Atascosa County's goal is to provide a clean and sanitary workspace for employees, customers, and visitors to any county building, as well as preventing damage to county property. Likewise, pets and animals are prohibited in the workplace.
An employee who requires assistance of a service dog (defined by 28 CFR 36.104) will be permitted to bring their service dog to their workplace in conformance with the Americans Disabilities Act and Texas Law. An employee who brings a service dog or fails to comply with the policy, is completely and solely liable for any injuries or any damages to personal or county property by the animal.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

1B-9 HARASSMENT

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

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

Employees who feel they have been harassed should immediately report the situation to the elected official, appointed official, department head, County Judge, Human Resources, or the County Attorney.

Every reported complaint will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. While all claims of harassment shall be handled with discretion, there can be no complete assurance of full confidentiality. The official or department head to which a claim has been reported shall be responsible for seeing that prompt action is taken to investigate the claim. All claims of harassment must be reported to the Human Resources department immediately. The investigation of the claim shall be conducted in coordination with human resources department and/or the County Attorney's office.

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

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

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

1B-10 SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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

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

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

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

Every reported complaint will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. The official or department head to which a claim has been reported shall be responsible for seeing that prompt action is taken to investigate the claim. The investigation of the claim shall be conducted in coordination with human resources department and/or the County Attorney's office.

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

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

a) When practical, confront the harasser and ask them to stop the unwanted behavior.
b) Record the time, place and specifics of each incident, including any witnesses.
c) Report continuing sexual harassment to the Elected Official, Appointed Official, or Department Head who is responsible for your department or to the County Judge or the County Attorney.

d) If a thorough investigation reveals that unlawful sexual harassment has occurred, Atascosa County will take effective remedial action in accordance with the circumstances, up to and including termination.

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

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

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

1B-11 POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Employees of Atascosa County shall have the right to support candidates of their choice and to engage in political activity during their personal time.

County employees shall not: 1) Use their official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the result of any election or nomination for office; 2) Directly or indirectly coerce, attempt to coerce, command, or advise another person to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value to a party, committee, organization, agency, or person for a political reason; or 3) Use any equipment, property or material owned by the County for political activity or engage in political activity while on duty for the County.

Employees are required to remove County uniforms prior to participating in a political activity. Additionally, no county-owned property, vehicle, building, or office may be used to display political or campaigning materials. This section does not apply to the use of the Courthouse, Courthouse grounds, or County buildings when used for the purpose of political announcements.

No County employee who is subject to the provisions of the federal Hatch Act may be a candidate for elective office in a partisan election. County employees are subject to this additional Hatch Act restriction if their principal employment is in connection with an activity which is financed in whole or in party by loans or grants made by the federal government. An employee's political activity which is not in violation of this section, will not be considered in determining their compensation, eligibility for promotion or demotion, work assignment, leave or travel request, or in applying any other employment practices to the employee.

1B-12 OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Atascosa County employees are expected to give their full and undivided attention to their job duties. They should not use Atascosa County facilities or equipment or their association with Atascosa County to carry on a private business or profession. Unless express approval is obtained in advance and in writing from their immediate supervisor, county employees should not engage in a profit-making business nor become involved with a non-profit organization outside of their employment with Atascosa County that interferes with the employee's assigned duties with Atascosa County.

1B-13 BREAKS

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act amended the Fair Labor Standards Act to require reasonable breaks for nursing mothers to express breast milk. The Texas Right to Express Breast Milk in the Workplace Act also imposes duties on public employers and, under other state law, is applicable for the duration of a nursing mother's need to express breast milk. Atascosa County supports the practice of expressing breast milk.

Atascosa County will provide twenty (20) minute paid breaks for a nursing mother to express breast milk. The nursing mother will be allowed reasonable time needed to express breast milk. Break time to express breast milk in excess of twenty (20) minutes will be unpaid and the employee shall indicate this break period on their time record.

The County will provide the nursing mother with a private location, other than a bathroom. The location will be shielded from view and free from intrusion and appropriate for expressing breast milk. The specific location will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Atascosa County does not allow any retaliation against a nursing mother for asking for this break. Nursing mothers are entitled to this break for the duration of the time they are expressing breast milk. A reasonable accommodation will be given for the needs of employees who express breast milk. An employee of the county who needs to express breast milk may not be discriminated against.

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

1B-14 GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Any employee who has a grievance related to their job should discuss the grievance with their department head, elected official, or to Human Resources. If the discussion with the department head or elected official does not resolve the grievance, the employee should notify Human Resources immediately and submit the facts, details and policies violated as the basis for the grievance in writing within 30 days of the event that serves as the basis for the grievance.

If the employee is dissatisfied with any proposed resolution following the completion of an investigation, they may appeal the resolution within (ten) 10 days, by notifying the Human Resources department and the County Judge of the appeal. The appeal shall be placed on the Commissioners' Court agenda within 30-days. The appeal may be presented to the Commissioners' Court in Executive Session and the employee shall have the opportunity to present their side of the appeal and provide the Commissioners' with copies of all documentation of the grievance forms initially filed through the department head or elected official, or Human Resources. Failure to appeal presumes that the employee is satisfied with the resolution.

The department head or elected official is required to notify Human Resources immediately of an allegation of harassment of any kind or discrimination.

1B-15 DISCIPLINE

Each supervisor shall have the authority to administer disciplinary action, based on employee violations of policy and procedures in their department with the guidance of the Human Resources Department and the County Attorney. Disciplinary action should be based on the County progressive disciplinary action policy but the appropriate disciplinary action should be applied on a case-by-case basis.

Depending on the severity of the situation, discipline may range from informal counseling up to and including immediate termination.

The following are examples of reasons for administering disciplinary action, up to and including termination and is a non-inclusive list:

A. Insubordination
B. Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of property
C. Falsification of time-keeping records
D. Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
E. Possession, distribution, sale, transfer, or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace, while on duty, or while operating employer-owned vehicles or equipment
F. Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace
G. Absence without leave including failure to notify a department head or elected official of sick leave, repeated tardiness, or early departure

H. Boisterous or disruptive activity in the workplace
I. Conviction of a felony or any crime of moral turpitude
J. Conviction of official misconduct or oppression
K. Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of employer-owned or customer-owned property
L. Violation of safety or health rules
M. Smoking in prohibited areas
N. Harassment, including sexual harassment, that has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with individuals work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment
O. Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the workplace
P. Violation of the Atascosa County Employee Handbook or department specific handbook
Q. Unsatisfactory performance or conduct
R. Falsification of documentation or records
S. Involvement in any activity or record of activity which would increase Atascosa County 's insurance risk or premiums

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.

Atascosa County retains the right to terminate the employment of any individual at any time for any legal reason, or no reason, 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.

1B-16 LICENSE AND CERTIFICATIONS

Atascosa County has many 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 placed on leave (unpaid), 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 a license or certification is illegal under either Federal or State Law.

1B-17 WEATHER CLOSINGS AND EMERGENCIES

As a general practice, Atascosa County does not close its operations unless the health, safety, and security of county employees are seriously brought into question. When this happens, either because of severe weather conditions or other emergencies, the County Judge is responsible for initiating the closing. In the event of a county wide closing, employees will be compensated according to their schedule.

The County Judge and Emergency Management Director will notify employees and the public via email and the Atascosa County Facebook Page. Announcements of an emergency closing will, to the extent possible, specify the starting and ending times of the closing. However, each elected official controls the working hours of their employees, even in an emergency situation.

Many county departments are continuously operating public safety and service departments. Many county personnel will be required to work during emergency closings. Each official or department head is responsible for designating their own employees and providing alternate information to personnel designated as essential during emergency closings. Public safety will be foremost in the development of departmental emergency action plans.

Certain offices such as the County Sheriff, Roads and Bridges, Emergency Medical Services, and Emergency Management Coordinator are expected to remain open during emergency situations. Department personnel should contact their Elected Official/Department Head for specific guidance.

1B-18 CONFIDENTIALITY

Atascosa 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.

Regarding the personnel information on employees of Atascosa County; much of the 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.

1B-19 WHISTLEBLOWER

An employee may, in good faith, report an alleged violation of a Atascosa County Policy or federal or state law to their department head, elected official, or human resources unless all of these persons are the alleged perpetrators of the alleged violation of policy or law. If all the listed people are alleged to be involved in the violation, the employee may report the allegation to the County Attorney or the Commissioners Court to be addressed timely in Executive Session of the next Commissioners' Court meeting. The Human Resources and/or county attorney will assist in the investigation of the reported activity.

An official, supervisor, department director, or any other employee is prohibited from taking adverse employment action against an employee who, in good faith, reports an alleged violation of County policy or federal or state law to a designated person, pursuant to this policy.

An employee who intentionally makes a false report of wrongdoing may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

An employee who, in good faith, believes they are being subjected to retaliation based on a report of alleged wrongdoing under this policy should immediately contact human resources, county attorney or the county judge. An employee with a question regarding this policy should contact human resources.

C. COUNTY PROPERTY AND EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

1C-1 COUNTY PROPERTY USAGE

Each county employee shall be responsible for the care, maintenance, proper use, and upkeep of any County equipment assigned to them. County employees shall only use equipment, tools, and other County property that they are authorized to use. Personal use of county equipment, supplies, tools, and any other county property is not permitted and may result in discipline up to and including termination. Improper use may subject employees to criminal prosecution.

Employees are required to return all Atascosa County property immediately upon request or upon termination of employment. Failure to return county property will result in the deduction from the final pay of the value of the property or the county may take legal action.

1C-2 COUNTY VEHICLE USAGE

Some employees may be required to use county vehicles as a part of their job. Employees who are assigned county vehicles shall be responsible for the care, maintenance, proper use and upkeep of these vehicles. Employees may only use the vehicles they are authorized to use. Employees may not allow other individuals to operate the vehicles they have been assigned.

If personal use of a county vehicle is permitted, the employee will be required to keep a log of all personal miles driven, including to and from work. These personal miles will be subject to payroll taxes at the current IRS rate in accordance with IRS rules and regulations.

Employees who operate vehicles must maintain a current active license for the operation of that vehicle. If they have any change in status of their license, they must immediately notify their supervisor and Human Resources. An employee whose job involves the operation of a vehicle requiring a license for its legal operation shall be subject to possible job change, demotion or termination if that license is suspended or revoked.

Human Resources will conduct a motor vehicle record (MVR) check on all applicants following a conditional offer of employment and, thereafter, annually for all employees. Human Resources will review the MVR following completion of the check and reach out to candidates and employees with an unacceptable MVR. Each department shall submit MVR guidelines based on the department and job description to Human Resources.

The following is a guideline for an unacceptable MVR and is a non-inclusive list:

A. Suspended, revoked, or cancelled license
B. Three or more moving violations in the past 36 months
C. One or more instances of driving under the influence (DUI) or driving while intoxicated (DWI) within he past 24 months
D. At fault in a fatal accident within the past five years
E. Leaving the scene of an accident within the past 36 months
F. Reckless driving within the past 12 months

Any employee involved in an accident while operating County equipment or vehicles shall immediately report the accident to their supervisor and to the proper law enforcement or other authority immediately. A copy of all accident and incident reports prepared by the employee shall be sent to the supervisor and the County Judge. All accidents shall be reported to the County Attorney and, if applicable, the insurance agent for the county.

1C-3 CELL PHONE USAGE

Atascosa County determines on a case-by-case basis the need for county provided cell phones. County cell phones are to be used for business purposes only.

Atascosa County strongly discourages the use of any cell phone while operating any vehicle. Employees should plan calls to allow placement of calls either prior to traveling or while on rest breaks.

Atascosa County prohibits all employees from texting while operating any county owned vehicle. County 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 10,000 GWR from texting with fines and penalties, up to including loss of CDL.

Employees in possession of a Atascosa County owned cellular phone are required to take appropriate precautions to prevent damage, theft and vandalism.

Each department may set their own rules and regulations regarding personal cell phone usage while at work.

1C-4 COMPUTER AND INTERNET USAGE

The use of Atascosa County information systems, including computers, fax machines, smart phones, tablet computers and all forms of Internet/Intranet access, is for Atascosa County business and for authorized purposes only. Brief and occasional personal use of the electronic mail system or the Internet is acceptable as long as it is approved by the supervisor or department head and not excessive or inappropriate, and occurs during personal time (lunch or other breaks), and does not result in any expense to the County.

Use is defined as "excessive" if it interferes with normal job functions, responsiveness, or the ability to perform daily job activities. Electronic communication should not be used to solicit or sell products or services that are unrelated to the County's business; distract, intimidate, or harass coworkers or third parties; or disrupt the workplace.

Use of Atascosa County computers, networks, and Internet access is a privilege granted by officials or department heads and may be revoked at any time for inappropriate conduct carried out on such systems. County employees shall have no expectation of privacy when using county computers, networks, phones or other county owned equipment. Improper use may result in discipline up to and including termination.

Atascosa County owns the rights to all data and files in any computer, network, or other information system used in the county or on county equipment. Atascosa County also reserves the right to monitor electronic mail messages (including personal/private/instant messaging systems, Facebook, twitter, etc.) and their content, as well as any and all use of the Internet and of computer equipment used to create, view, or access e-mail and Internet content. Employees must be aware that the electronic mail messages sent and received using county equipment are not private and are subject to viewing, downloading, inspection, release, and archiving by county officials at all times. Atascosa County has the right to inspect any and all files stored in private areas of the network or on individual computers or storage media in order to assure compliance with policy and state and federal laws. No employee may access another employee's computer, computer files, or electronic mail messages without prior authorization from either the employee or an appropriate county official. No employee shall break any copyright laws, download any illegal or unauthorized downloads. Atascosa County monitors its entire informational systems and employees may be subject to discipline up to and including termination for any misuse of county informational systems or violation of policy.

Employees should not bring personal computers to the workplace or connect them to Atascosa County electronic systems, unless expressly permitted to do so by their supervisor and/or IT department. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

D. SAFETY AND HEALTH EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

1D-1 WORKERS COMPENSATION

All Atascosa County employees are covered by workers' compensation coverage while on duty for the County. Workers' compensation coverage pays for medical bills resulting from a covered injury or illness an employee incurs while carrying out the duties of their job. Workers' compensation also pays Temporary Income Benefits (TIBS) for time lost from work in excess of seven calendar days as the result of eligible work-related injuries or illnesses, with the exception of Law Enforcement employees who receive salary continuation.

Employees may use paid leave for all workers' compensation time off less than 8 days.

Any employee who suffers from a job-related illness or injury is required to notify their department head or elected official, and the human resources department, as soon as possible. Failure to promptly report job related injuries or illnesses may affect an employee's eligibility for benefits or delay benefit payments.

An employee who has lost time because of a work-related accident or illness is required to provide a release from the attending physician before being allowed to return to work.

An employee's workers' 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.

Atascosa County will make every effort to bring the injured employee back to work as soon as reasonably possible. Atascosa County has a return-to-work policy in place and if a position is found that will meet all the restrictions, the employee will be given a bona fide offer of employment. If the employee refuses to return to work, and family medical leave has been exhausted, workers' compensation benefits may be affected, and the employee may be terminated.

1D-2 RETURN TO WORK

This policy covers employees who are on leave due to a work-related injury or illness. Because employees are our most valuable resource, Atascosa County attempts to help employees return to work as soon as possible.

An employee on leave due to a work-related injury or illness may return to work only when Atascosa County receives a medical release from the treating doctor. It is the responsibility of the human resources department, department head or elected official to provide the physician with a current job description for accurate determination of restrictions. It is a violation of County policy for any employee receiving worker's compensation benefits of any kind to be employed with a third party on a full-time or part-time basis. Violation of this policy may result in termination.

Atascosa County counts an employee's leave due to a work-related injury or toward the employee's twelve (12) week qualifying leave entitlement under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Because workers' compensation leave is designated as FMLA leave, benefits are governed by the applicable provisions or the FMLA policy contained herein.

Return to work options:

- Return to prior position at full duty with doctor's release stating that the injured employee can perform the job functions without restrictions.
- Light Duty – for any employee who is not able to return to their prior position and perform the regular duties of that job but can return with certain restrictions, Atascosa County will try to accommodate light duty when possible but **cannot guarantee** the availability of light duty.

Employees on light duty are not guaranteed the rate of pay they received for the position they held at the time of injury or illness. Law enforcement and EMS are guaranteed one hundred percent (100%) salary continuation as guaranteed by the State Constitution. The pay rate for light duty is based on the knowledge skills and abilities required for that job, as well as general market conditions. Employees in a light duty position are not permitted to supplement their workers' compensation benefits by using their vacation, holiday, compensatory or sick leave.

Twelve (12) week limit - Light duty assignments are **temporary** arrangements intended to complement and facilitate the healing process. Light duty may be initially offered for a period of four (4) weeks and then will be reviewed and evaluated by the supervisor based, in part, on the recommendation of the physician (unless FMLA time is still available).

Employee refusal of work - In the event an employee refuses to return to regular or light duty work in response to a written, bona fide offer of employment by Atascosa County, will result in the loss of workers' compensation benefits or the employee maybe separated from employment with Atascosa County subject to FMLA qualification and their position may be filled permanently. A written, bona fide offer of employment must clearly state:

- The position offered and the duties of the position
- Atascosa County's agreement to meet the conditions set out by the treating doctor
- The job's wage, working hours and location.

Medical Information
All employees' medical information is confidential in accordance with HIPPA, and state and federal law regarding Protected Health Information, and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA). Medical inquiries are limited to those permitted under Texas Workers' Compensation Statute and applicable federal law.

Coordination with FMLA
Nothing in this policy should be construed as denying employees their protections under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or any other federal or state law. It is Atascosa County's policy to designate an employee's leave due to a work-related injury or illness as FMLA, if eligible. Atascosa County counts the period of any employee's light duty assignment toward the employee's FMLA entitlement, as applicable.

Until employees have exhausted their twelve (12) week FMLA leave, they have the right to be reinstated to their original job or an equivalent job provided they are able to perform the essential functions of the job. In the event, the employee is unable to perform the essential functions of their job, the department head, with the assistance of the Human Resources department, will assess the options available, which may include separation of employment.

1D-3 EMPLOYEE SAFETY

Atascosa County is committed to providing a safe workplace for our employees.

Each County employee must adhere to the general safety standards established for all employees as well as comply with their departmental safety requirements. Safety procedures may differ in each county department. Your supervisor will provide you with specific information pertaining to your position.

Failure to follow the safety standards set by the County or your supervisor subjects an employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Employees who observe unsafe working conditions shall either take steps to correct those conditions or report the unsafe conditions to their supervisor or human resources department.

1D-4 DRUG AND ALCOHOL- ALL EMPLOYEES

Atascosa County is a drug and alcohol-free workplace. A county employee may not be present at work when impaired by the use of drugs and/or alcohol. The County believes that a drug and alcohol-free workplace will help ensure a healthy, safe, and secure work environment.

This policy applies to all employees of Atascosa County regardless of rank or position and shall include full time, part time, seasonal and temporary employees. An employee may not be in possession of illegal contraband on county property or in a county vehicle or equipment.

An employee may not unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, sell, purchase, or use a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia on County property or while conducting County business not on County property.

An employee may not be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on County property or while on duty for the County or in a County vehicle.

An employee may not possess or use unauthorized prescription or over-the-counter drugs while on County property or while on duty for the County. An employee may not use prescription or over-the-counter drugs while on County property or while on duty for the County in a manner other than that intended by the manufacturer or prescribed by a physician.

An employee may use prescription and over-the-counter drugs in standard dosage or according to a physician's prescription if the use will not impair the employee's ability to do their job safely and effectively. An employee must keep prescription medications used at work in their original container.

An employee taking prescribed or over-the-counter medications is responsible for consulting the prescribing physician or a pharmacist to determine if the medication could interfere with the safe and effective performance of their job duties.

If the use of medication could compromise an employee's ability to do their job or the safety of the employee, fellow employees or the public, the employee must report the condition to their supervisor at the start of the workday or use appropriate personnel procedures (e.g., call in sick, use leave, request change of duty).
A supervisor must treat any information related to an employee's authorized use of prescription medications and any other medical information provided by the employee as confidential information.

An employee having problems with drugs or alcohol is encouraged to seek treatment from a qualified professional. Information on benefits provided for treatment of alcohol and drug abuse problems provided by the County's health plan program is available in the employee's health plan booklet or from the Human Resources Office.

Any employee who violates this policy shall be subject to disciplinary measures up to and including termination.

Employees with questions or concerns about substance dependency or abuse are encouraged to discuss these matters with human resources to receive assistance or referrals to appropriate resources in the community. An employee who voluntarily asks for time off to get treatment and recover from a drug or alcohol abuse problem will be given protection as required by law.

Upon returning to work from a bona fide inpatient treatment facility, the employee will be subjected to a volunteer drug testing program as often as monthly until there is evidence the employee no longer uses. Failure to comply with the requirements of the post rehabilitative program including refusing the volunteer testing program may result in termination. The post rehabilitation program will last for as long as two years. If at any time the employee tests positive or refuses the volunteer drug test during this post rehabilitation program the employee may be terminated.
Under the Drug-Free Workplace Act, an employee is required to notify Atascosa County of a criminal conviction for drug-related activity. The report must be made to human resources within five (5) days of the conviction.

Atascosa County will drug test employees who ARE NOT CDL license holders under the following conditions:

Pre-employment drug testing:
Atascosa County has a pre-employment drug testing requirement that must be passed post offer before an employee starts their first day of work. All offers of employment are conditional upon passing a drug and alcohol test. The employee will sign a consent waiver.

Suspicion-Based Testing:
Under the Influence shall be defined as having a blood alcohol concentration of 0.02 or more.

Reasonable Suspicion – If an employee is having work performance problems or displaying behavior that may be alcohol or drug related or is otherwise demonstrating conduct that may be in violation of this drug and alcohol policy where immediate action is necessary, the elected official or department head will require that employee to submit to alcohol or drug test. The following conditions might be signs of possible alcohol or drug use (not an all-inclusive list):

- Abnormally dilated or constricted pupils
- Glazed stare – redness of eyes (sclera)
- Flushed face
- Change of speech (faster, slower, slurred)
- Constant sniffing
- Increased absences
- Redness under nose
- Sudden weight loss
- Needle Marks
- Change in personality (i.e. paranoia)
- Increased appetite for sweets
- Forgetfulness, performance faltering, poor concentration

- Constant fatigue or hyperactivity
- Smell of alcohol
- Difficulty walking
- Excessive, unexplained absences
- Dulled mental processes
- Slow reaction rate

Elected Officials or supervisors must take action if they have reason to believe one or more of the above listed conditions is indicated and that the substance abuse is affecting their employee's job performance or behavior. The following steps will be taken:

1. Confront the employee involved and keep them under direct observation until the situation is resolved. Inform the employee of the problem with their job performance and specific violations of the County Policy.
2. If the supervisor believes, after observing or talking to the employee, that the conduct or performance problem could be due to substance abuse, the employee will be immediately required to submit to a drug or alcohol test. If the employee refuses to submit to testing for any reason, the employee may be terminated.
3. Employees will be asked to release any evidence, such as alcohol or drug paraphernalia, relating to the observation for further testing. Failure to comply may subject the employee to subsequent discipline, up to and including termination. All confiscated evidence will be receipted for with signatures of either the elected official or supervisor as well as the employee.
4. The elected official or department head will **remove** the employee from the county workstation and ensure that the employee is transported to an appropriate collection site and thereafter to the employee's residence. Under no circumstances will the employee be allowed to drive a vehicle until a confirmed negative test result is received.
5. The elected official or supervisor shall, within 24 hours or before the results of the controlled substance test are released, document the particular facts related to the behavior or performance problems and present such documentation to the Atascosa Office for filing.

Post-Accident Testing:
All employees directly involved in an on-the-job accident or incident resulting in property damage and/or medical treatment are required to be tested.

Testing Procedures –

1. The employee will be escorted and driven to the designated facility for specimen collection and/or testing.
2. The employee will be required to follow the drug testing protocol of the medical facility providing the testing.

3. If the employee desires another test to be given, they may do so within 2 hours of the specimen being collected and the same specimen will be used. The cost of this request will be paid for by the employee. All initial costs will be paid for by Atascosa County.
4. The employee will be placed on paid administrative leave until the results of the test are known. The elected official or supervisor will make arrangements to ensure that the employee is safely returned to their residence.
5. Under no circumstances, unless required or authorized by law, will alcohol or drug testing information be released without written consent from the employee.

Each employee is expected to cooperate and consent to a drug test when requested under the terms of this policy. Refusal to consent to a drug and/or alcohol test when requested is a cause for termination.

Any employee who violates this drug and alcohol policy may be terminated.

1D-5 DRUG AND ALCOHOL- CDL EMPLOYEES

CDL Drivers are an extremely valuable resource for Atascosa County's business. Their health and safety is a serious county concern. Drug or alcohol use may pose a serious threat to driver's health and safety. It is, therefore, the policy of the County to prohibit CDL employees from being under the influence of or using illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours.

Atascosa County will conduct pre-employment, random, reasonable suspicion and post-accident drug testing in accordance with state and federal law.

1D-6 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Atascosa County is committed to providing a workplace free of violence. Atascosa 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. All threats will be taken seriously and will be investigated. Employees must refrain from any conduct or comments that might make another employee suspicious or fear for their safety. Employees are required to report all suspicious conduct or comments to their immediate supervisor or to human resources. Employees should be aware of their surroundings at all times and report any suspicious behavior from the public, former employees or current employees to their immediate supervisor, human resources, or the sheriff's department. No employee may possess a firearm or other weapon other than an authorized law enforcement official, with or without permits in all county offices and buildings owned or used by Atascosa County, this also includes county owned vehicles. If employees believe that a person is violating this policy, they should immediately report to their immediate supervisor, human resources, or the sheriff's department. Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to discipline up to and including immediate termination.

Atascosa County is committed to preventing workplace violence and to maintaining a safe work environment. Accordingly, Atascosa County has adopted the following guidelines to deal with intimidation, harassment, disrespect toward others or other threats of (or actual) violence that may occur during business hours or on its premises.

The Atascosa County expects all employees to treat each other and our citizens, vendors and others with whom we do business with courtesy and respect at all times. Employees are expected to refrain from physical conduct such as fighting, bullying, "horseplay," or other conduct that may be dangerous to others. Firearms, weapons, and other dangerous or hazardous devices or substances are prohibited from the premises of Atascosa County without proper authorization, and employees should not have these items in their possession at any time while working, even if off premises.

Atascosa County will not tolerate conduct that threatens, intimidates, or harasses another employee, or a member of the public at any time, including off-duty periods. This prohibition includes all acts of harassment, including harassment based on an individual's race, color, religion, gender/sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, citizenship status, genetic information, military status, age, and disability, or any other classification protected by applicable local, state, or federal laws.

Examples of prohibited workplace violence include, but are not limited to:

- Using or threatening to use a weapon against an individual;
- Hitting, shoving, or otherwise assaulting an individual;
- Bullying or threatening an individual or the individual's family, friends, associates, or property with harm;
- Intentional destruction or threatening to destroy other individuals' property;
- Making harassing or threatening contact through phone calls or other means;
- Harassing, surveillance, or stalking;
- Physically aggressive, violent or threatening behavior (both verbal and nonverbal), such as attempts to instill fear in others or intimidation;
- Verbal or physical threats of any sort (including to oneself or others);
- Any other conduct that suggests a tendency toward violent behavior. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to, excessive arguing, profanity, threats of sabotage of Atascosa County property, belligerent speech or a demonstrated pattern of insubordination and refusal to follow Atascosa County policies and procedures;
- Causing physical damage to the Atascosa County's facilities or defacing Atascosa County property; or
- With the exception of, Atascosa County security and authorized personnel, carrying firearms or weapons of any type or kind onto Atascosa County premises or while conducting Atascosa County business, unless otherwise allowed by state and federal law.

This list is illustrative only and not exhaustive. No form of workplace violence will be tolerated. All threats of (or actual) violence, both direct and indirect, verbal or nonverbal, that occur during work, or that may affect you at work, should be reported as soon as possible to your immediate supervisor or any other member of management or human resources department. This includes threats by employees, as well as threats by vendors, solicitors, or other members of the public. When reporting a threat of violence, you should be as specific and detailed as possible.

You should also report all suspicious individuals or activities as soon as possible to a supervisor. If more immediate action is needed, call 911. Do not place yourself in peril. If you see or hear a commotion or disturbance near your workstation, do not try to intercede or observe what is happening.

Atascosa County will promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports related to alleged violation of this policy and of threats of (or actual) violence and of suspicious individuals or activities. The Atascosa County will use discretion and take all reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality of the individual making a report, unless necessary to protect the safety of an individual. In order to maintain workplace safety and the integrity of its investigation, Atascosa County may suspend employees, either with or without pay, pending investigation.

Atascosa County encourages employees to bring their disputes or differences with other employees to the attention of their supervisors or the Human Resources Manager before the situation escalates into potential violence. Atascosa County is eager to assist in the resolution of employee disputes and will not discipline or retaliate against employees for raising such concerns in good faith.

Atascosa County employees should notify the Human Resources Department if they are aware of any restraining orders that are in effect, or of the existence of any other non-work-related situation with the potential to erupt into workplace violence.

Atascosa County will not tolerate retaliation in any form against an employee who makes a report of workplace violence. If, after a thorough investigation, Atascosa County determines that workplace violence has occurred, appropriate corrective action will be taken, and discipline will be imposed on the offending employee(s) up to and included termination of employment.

1B-7 HARASSMENT AND DISRESPECT TOWARD OTHERS POLICY

To promote equal employment opportunities for all employees, Atascosa County strives to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding in the workplace. Toward that end, Atascosa County considers the use of demeaning, belittling, humiliating, insulting, or other forms of disrespectful language toward or about yourself or others to be unacceptable. The following types of speech terms, conduct, or behavior are to be considered when determining whether particular speech terms or conduct or behavior are unacceptable under this policy:

1. Whether you or another employee would feel discriminated against or insulted if someone else who is different from you were to use that term when referring to you or speaking to you about someone else;
2. Whether referring to yourself or another person in such a way would tend to segregate yourself or others on a minority basis;
3. Whether such terminology tends to perpetuate racial, ethnic, gender, or other minority stereotypes; and
4. Whether such terms would make a normal person feel belittled, needled, or picked on.

While the context of such statements or conduct or behavior can be important in judging whether the statements violate this policy, in general, Atascosa County will consider any such language, terms, conduct, or behavior unacceptable and will follow up on and promptly investigate any complaints received by Management or the Human Resources Department.

The following examples illustrate what is unacceptable under this policy (the list is not exhaustive and is only a general guide):

- Slurs and other disrespectful terms relating to a person's race, color, religion, age, national origin, citizenship status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, or disability
- Excessive or habitual use of terms relating to a person's characteristics, if a reasonable person would feel excluded, belittled, or singled out for unwanted attention through such language
- Referring to people in terms of their assumed nationalities
- Words relating to gender stereotypes
- Profane or obscene references to yourself or others

It is no excuse that you apply an unacceptable term to yourself. Such terms inevitably disturb others, even if they do not say so out loud. Further, they could perpetuate unfavorable stereotypes and foster a hostile work environment. Using unacceptable language, speech, terms, conduct, or behavior in the workplace calls into question the speaker's/actor’s maturity, judgment, and suitability as an Atascosa County employee. Such

speech, terms, language, conduct, and/or behavior will not be tolerated. Depending upon the severity and repeat nature of a particular offense, a violation of this policy will result in appropriate corrective action, up to and potentially including termination of employment.

Nothing in this policy should be construed to interfere with or deny the constitutional or statutory rights of any Atascosa County employee.

1D-8 SOCIAL MEDIA

For purposes of this policy "social media" includes, but is not limited to, online forums, blogs and social networking sites, such as TikTok, X, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Instagram, etc. Atascosa County recognizes the importance of social media for its employees. However, use of social media by employees may become a problem if: it interferes with the employee's work and/or position in the county; is used to harass supervisors, co-workers, customers or vendors; creates a hostile work environment; or harms the goodwill and reputation of Atascosa County among the community at large. Atascosa County encourages employees to use social media within the parameters of the following guidelines and in a way that does not produce the adverse consequences mentioned above.

Where no policy or guideline exists, employees are expected to use their best judgment and take the most prudent action possible. If you are uncertain about the appropriateness of a social media posting, check with your supervisor or human resources.

- If your posts on social media mention Atascosa County make clear that you are an employee of Atascosa County and that the views posted are yours alone and do not represent the views of Atascosa County.
- Do not mention Atascosa County supervisors, employees, customers or vendors without their express consent.
- If you see a misrepresentation about Atascosa County, respond respectfully with factual information, not inflammatory comments, or refer it to your supervisor or department head to address.
- Remember, you are responsible for what you write or present on social media. You can be sued by other employees, supervisors, customers or vendors, and any individual that views your social media posts as defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous or creating a hostile work environment. Employees can be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination for what they post on social media platforms, even if the employee did not use a county computer or if the post did not occur during work hours or on county property.
- Employees may not use Atascosa County computer equipment for non-work-related activities without prior written permission. Social media activities should not interfere with your duties at work. Atascosa County monitors its computers to ensure compliance with this restriction.
- You must comply with copyright laws and cite or reference sources accurately.
- Do not link to Atascosa County's website or post Atascosa County material on a social media site without written permission from your supervisor.

- All Atascosa County policies that regulate off-duty conduct apply to social media activity including, but not limited to, policies related to illegal harassment and code of conduct.
- Any confidential information that you obtained through your position at Atascosa County must be kept confidential and should not be discussed through social media forum.
- Violation of this policy must be reported immediately to Human Resources and violations may lead to discipline up to and including the immediate termination of employment.

It is the policy of Atascosa County that supervisors do not engage in social media activities with their employees.

SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATIONS AND SERVICES PROHIBITED ON COUNTY DEVICES

Atascosa County prohibits the installation or use of the social media service TikTok or any 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 Atascosa 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, Atascosa 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.

1D-9 ELECTED OFFICIAL AND DEPARTMENTAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Elected officials are held to a stricter standard than general employees and members of the public. The county's purpose in utilizing social media is to reach a larger county audience, supplying county-related information, news, and events to its constituents, and to provide an avenue for members of the public to report safety concerns and other related information to the county. The Code of Ethics and Conduct expected in other professional interactions are also expected in the use of an elected official social media page.

This policy establishes the procedures for all official Atascosa County use of social media to ensure that it is aligned with the county interests. This policy and procedures below applies to all elected officials and departments of Atascosa County.

Procedure

Before engaging in social media activity on behalf of Atascosa County, elected officials and departments should consider their goals, the legal issues, technical capabilities, ability to comply with this policy, and the potential benefits and risks.

Atascosa County departments and elected officials utilizing social media shall ensure their use of social media complies with all applicable laws, ordinances, and policies.

Atascosa County social media must be utilized only for the purpose of conducting official county business. County social media or social networking platforms should only be conducted by authorized personnel acting in an official capacity. Employees are prohibited from using county computers and other County communication devices for unofficial participation in social media.

Use of Atascosa County logos and trademarks is limited to persons specifically authorized to do so on official County pages. If you are not authorized to speak on behalf of the county on social media, your department's name and symbols/logos should not appear on your social media communications.

Before an official Atascosa County account can be established on any social media site, a department must define a need and purpose, and secure written approval from the department head and notify the County IT Director.

All Atascosa County social media accounts shall include the Atascosa County IT Director as an administrator. The account will indicate county ownership and display the department's name and contact information. The account will also provide a link to the official Atascosa County website.

All Atascosa County social media accounts shall include the Atascosa County Social Media Disclaimer set forth below or a link to the Disclaimer within the social media platform.

Atascosa County departments and agencies maintaining an official County social media account should delegate responsibility for management of the County social media account to an employee with the required level of authority. This account manager and the department head shall have access to all user account information, including login, email and password information. The department or agency should identify personnel authorized to utilize the account and designate personnel to regularly monitor the information published or distributed under the department's purview.

The IT Director and account manager will remove access credentials when an employee is no longer authorized to access the account.

Those departments maintaining a social media account(s) have the discretion to turn off all third party comments; however, should third-party comments be permitted, removal of any comments will be consistent with the Atascosa County Social Media Disclaimer.

All Atascosa County social media content, including postings, messages, comments and responses is potentially subject to and shall be retained in accordance with the Texas Public Information Act (Texas Open Records Act), Chapter 552, Texas Government Code and County policies pertaining to record management, maintenance and retention, and shall be accessible in response to requests for information. This includes content removed from public view.

Atascosa County's main website shall include a directory of, and links to, all County social media accounts and the Atascosa County Social Media Disclaimer.

Any Atascosa County social media presence created before the effective date of this Social Media Policy must comply with its provisions and procedures within thirty days of the effective date of this Policy.

Should it be the intent of any department to terminate a social media account, notice will be provided to the IT Department at least thirty days prior to such termination.

1D-10 ATASCOSA COUNTY SOCIAL MEDIA DISCLAIMER

Comments, images, photos and links posted to Atascosa County managed social media accounts do not necessarily represent the views of Atascosa County. The County's policy is to allow comments in accordance with these guidelines.

Content will be removed from public view if it:

- Contains vulgar, obscene, threatening, abusive, harassing or defamatory language or images;
- Is harmful to children and minors;
- Is invasive of privacy;
- Contains offensive content targeting protected classes, or is racially or ethnically objectionable;
- Discloses personally-identifiable medical or health information, or other confidential or sensitive information that the poster does not have permission to disclose;
- Endorses criminal conduct;
- Endangers the safety of the public;
- Contains commercial advertising;
- Includes endorsements or campaigning for political candidates;
- Infringes any copyright, trademark, patent or other proprietary right;
- Contains spam; or
- Is posted anonymously or under a false name.

Users certify that they have permission to post all information contained **in** their postings, including images and videos and that no trademark or copyright infringement has been committed.

Postings are intended for public use. Users do not retain any rights over their postings and any personal information posted releases any rights to privacy. Atascosa County does not guarantee that information posted by users is accurate and disclaims liability resulting from reliance on such information. Users who repeatedly violate this policy will be prohibited from commenting on Atascosa County social media accounts.

SECTION 2: EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

A. EMPLOYEE PAYROLL

2A-1 FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT SAFE HARBOR

Atascosa County makes every effort to pay its employees correctly. Occasionally, however, inadvertent mistakes can happen. When mistakes do happen and are called to human resources attention, Atascosa County will promptly make any corrections necessary. Please review your pay stub when you receive it to make sure it is correct. If you believe a mistake has occurred or if you have any questions, please use the reporting procedure outlined below. If you are overpaid the county will make the necessary corrections at the next payroll.

Employees who are classified as non-exempt employees must maintain an accurate record of the total hours you work each day. It is the responsibility of each employee to verify that their time sheets are correct. Your time card must accurately reflect all regular and overtime hours worked; any absences, late arrivals, early departures, and meal breaks. Do not sign your timecard if it is not accurate. When you receive each pay check, please verify immediately that you were paid correctly for all regular and overtime hours worked each work week.

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

It is a violation of Atascosa County policy for any employee to falsify a timecard, or to alter another employee's timecard. 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 timecard to under-or over-report hours worked. If anyone instructs you to (1) incorrectly or falsely under-or over-report your hours worked, or (2) alter another employee's time records to inaccurately or falsely report that employee's hours worked, you should report it immediately to human resources.

If you are classified as an exempt salaried employee, you will receive a salary which is intended to compensate you for all hours worked for the County. This salary will be established at the time of hire or when you become 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 you perform.

For exempt employees, your salary may also be reduced for certain types of deductions such as your portion of health, dental or life premiums; state, federal or local taxes, social security, retirement; or voluntary contributions to a deferred compensation plan. In any workweek in which you performed any work, your wages may be reduced for any of the following reasons: 1) absence from work for one or more full days for personal reasons, other than sickness or disability; or 2) full day disciplinary suspensions for infractions of our written policies and procedures; or 3) full day for violating safety rules of a major significance; or 4) Family and Medical Leave or Military Leave absences; or 5) to offset amounts received as payment for jury duty and witness fees or military pay; or 6) the first or last week of employment in the event you work less than a full week.

If you are an exempt employee, in any workweek in which you performed any work, your salary will not be reduced for any of the following reasons: 1) partial day absences for personal reasons, sickness or disability; or 2) your absence because the facility is closed on a scheduled work day; or 3) your absence because of the County's operating requirements; or 4) absences for jury duty, attendance as a witness, or military leave in any week in which you have performed any work; or 5) any other deductions prohibited by state or federal law.

Please note: it is not an improper deduction to reduce an employee's accrued vacation, personal or other forms of paid time off for full or partial day absences for personal reasons, sickness or disability. Employees accrued vacation, personal, sick, or compensatory time will be reduced if it exceeds the 40, 80 or 86 hour limit and will not be used to count towards overtime. If hours entered exceeds the limit, timesheets will be reduced accordingly by the Payroll department. This policy excludes first responders.

If you have questions about deductions from your pay, please immediately contact your supervisor or human resources. If you believe you have been subject to any improper deductions or your pay does not accurately reflect your hours worked, you should immediately report the matter to the Human Resources Department or your immediate supervisor. If you are unsure of who to contact or if you have not received a satisfactory response within five business days after reporting the incident, please immediately contact Human Resources or the County Attorney. 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. 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.

2A-2 INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE (IRS) FRINGE BENEFITS

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

2A-3 COMPENSATION

Atascosa County Commissioners Court annually sets the maximum compensation for each employee in accordance with Texas State Law.

Atascosa County complies with the Fair Labor Standards Acts as outlined in the Fair Labor Standards Safe Harbor policy.

Law Enforcement personnel are treated in accordance with the 207(k) exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act. The Commissioner's Court has adopted this exemption. (See 2A-10 Policy)

All non-exempt County employees shall be paid an hourly wage.

Temporary employees shall be paid hourly at least the minimum wage established by the Fair Labor Standards Act, as amended.

In the event of a major disaster where the County Judge has issued a disaster declaration and it has been extended by the Commissioners' Court, in order for the County to be reimbursed by FEMA, all salaried employees will be calculated in the same manner as hourly employees for the duration of the disaster incident and the disaster declaration is rescinded or allowed to expire.

2A-4 PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

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 deductions authorized by the Commissioners' Court and approved by the employee shall also be made from the employee's paycheck.

No optional deductions shall be made from an employee's paycheck unless the employee turns in written authorization for the deduction to the human resources office.

2A-5 WORK WEEKS AND WORK PERIODS

For purposes of recordkeeping and to determine overtime in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the workweek for Atascosa County shall begin at 12:01 a.m. on each Sunday and end seven (7) consecutive days later (168 hours). Law Enforcement employees who fall under the FLSA 207(k) exemption shall have a work period of 14 days and 86 hours as established by the Atascosa County Commissioners Court.

2A-6 TIMESHEETS revised 3.23.26

Federal and state laws require Atascosa County to keep an accurate record of time worked. To ensure adequate staffing, positive employee morale, and to meet expected standards throughout Atascosa County, timely and regular attendance is a condition of employment for all Atascosa County employees. Employees will be held accountable for adhering to their workplace schedule and documenting their time in the Time and Attendance System, TimeClock Plus. Accurately recording time worked is the responsibility of every employee, exempt or nonexempt. Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, or clocking in/out for another employee is grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment and legal action. TimeClock Plus produces governmental documents and as such require accurate and truthful information. Falsifying a time sheet, a governmental record, is a criminal offense. Employees shall only use the appropriate available leave to account for time off from their regular weekly work schedule.

Any employee with three (3) or more missed punches, may be required to come before Commissioners Court, along with their department head or elected official to explain the excessive missed punches. Additionally, any supervisor who routinely edits, changes, or adds time for employees may be subject to come before Commissioners Court to explain.

It is the employee's responsibility to approve their time records to certify the accuracy of all time recorded. Once the employee has approved their time, the elected official, appointed official or department head will review and then approve the time record before submitting it for payroll processing. In addition, if corrections or modifications are made to the time record, both the employee and the department head must verify and approve accuracy.

Once time is approved by both the employee and the department head or elected/appointed official, it is determined that it is a complete and final timesheet, and no further changes may be made. If an employee finds an error has occurred, corrections will be made on the following payroll. All timesheets are due to be final by the end of day on Monday prior to payroll week. If an extension is needed, a notification must be sent to the Human Resources department by noon on the Monday prior to payroll week or an extension may not be given.

The following positions are exempt from using TimeClock Plus and are paid on a salary basis. The exemptions below are responsible for accurately reporting any time used for personal, sick, or vacation to the human resources department:

- Atascosa County Elected and Appointed Officials
- Assistant County Attorney's
- Assistant District Attorney's
- Animal Control Shelter Director
- Emergency Management Coordinator
- Fire Marshal
- Deputy Fire Marshal-Environmental Crimes Officer
- Elections Administrator
- IT Manager
- Chief Juvenile Probation Officer
- Juvenile Detention Center Director
- Human Resources Director
- District Court-Court Reporters
- Public Defenders Office Attorneys
- Rural Development Director
- Veterans Service Officer
- Indigent Health Care Coordinator
- Maintenance Supervisor
- Post Juvenile Detention Center Clinical Program Director

TimeClock Plus Mobile App Access

Elected Officials may authorize access for their staff to utilize the TCP App. It is recommended that each Elected Official includes a policy within their internal departmental policies outlining the requirements and expectations for app utilization.

Department Heads must submit a formal request for their staff to access the TCP App, which must be reviewed and approved by the Commissioners Court. Each request should include a clear justification for the need and intended use of the app.

Requests for Mobile App Access must be submitted to the IT or HR department via email for activation. All other mobile web-based access is prohibited. Only employees granted access to the TCP app are authorized to utilize their mobile devices. All other employees are required to utilize a County computer or physical time-clock station located at their designated working area.

All records and reports generated through either the web-based or app-based use of TCP are official documents and may be used for payroll processing, audits, or investigations. Any employee found to be utilizing the TCP App or mobile web-clock without proper authorization is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

2A-7 PAY PERIODS

The pay period for Atascosa County shall be a two week pay period with the pay period dates approved by the Commissioners' Court. If payday falls on a holiday or a weekend, paychecks shall be issued on the last workday immediately preceding the holiday or weekend. For each pay period, time sheets are due to the Human Resources department by end of day on Monday prior to payroll week.

The Texas Payday Law does not apply to political subdivisions of Texas (Counties), therefore final wages will be issued on the regularly scheduled payday.

Atascosa County workweek is defined as Sunday through Saturday.

2A-8 WORK SCHEDULES

The normal hours of work for most positions in the County shall be from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Each official or department head shall determine the exact working schedules for their employees. 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, or they may be subject to call back in case of emergency or special need.

2A-9 HOURS WORKED

Hours worked shall include all the time actually spent in the service of the County as defined in the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and its regulations. The workday for the County shall begin at 12:01 a.m. each day and end 24 consecutive hours later.

2A-10 REMOTE WORK revised 10.26.26

Atascosa County generally requires employees to be physically present at their assigned work location during regularly scheduled hours. Remote work is permitted only with prior approval from the County Judge or the elected official responsible for the department. Approval is based on job duties, employee performance, and operational needs and must identify the approved schedule and duration.

Employees approved to work remotely must:

- Have the equipment, software, and secure internet access necessary to perform assigned duties.
- Work approved hours, accurately report time worked, and remain accessible by telephone and email.
- Maintain satisfactory productivity, meet deadlines, and respond promptly to work-related communications.
- Check in with their elected official, Department Head, or designated supervisor at least once each workday.

- Protect County equipment, records, and confidential information from unauthorized access.
- Report to the County worksite when directed.

Remote work does not replace approved leave. Requests involving a workplace accommodation must be coordinated with Human Resources.
Remote employees remain subject to the Employee Handbook and departmental policies. Approval may be modified or withdrawn based on operational needs or performance. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

2A-11 LAW ENFORCEMENT PAY AND OVERTIME

Atascosa County Commissioners Court has adopted the 207(k) exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act for law enforcement employees, which includes corrections officers. Law enforcement employees' compensation covers all hours up to 86 hours. These employees have a work period of 14 days and overtime will be due after 86 actual hours worked. Paid leave shall not be counted in determining if overtime has been earned in any pay period. When paid leave is used, any hours over 86 hours will be paid at the employees regular straight pay rate.

2A-12 OVERTIME CALCULATIONS AND RULES

Overtime shall include all time actually worked for the county in excess of 40 hours in any workweek, with the exception of law enforcement (See policy on "Law Enforcement Pay and Overtime.")

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

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

The maximum amount of unused compensatory time an employee shall be allowed to have at any one time is 40 hours. When an employee exceeds the 40 hour limit, the employee is required to use compensatory time prior to using personal time, vacation time, or sick time. Effective January 1, 2025, an employee who has an excess of 40 hours is required to bring the balance down to the maximum amount without creating an undue hardship on the operations of the department in which the employee works. The employee and department head or elected official must work together to bring the balance down.

Employees shall be allowed to use the compensatory time earned within a reasonable period after it is requested provided that the employees' absence will not place an undue hardship on

the operations of the department in which the employee works. Compensatory time may be used for any purpose desired by the employee with supervisor approval. Atascosa County shall have the right to require employees to use earned compensatory time at the convenience of the county based on business needs.

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

Atascosa County shall retain the right to "buy back" all or part of an employee's unused compensatory time by paying the employee for that time at the employee's current regular rate. Atascosa County shall retain the right to pay all or part of the overtime worked in any workweek by paying for that overtime at one and one-half (1 ½) the employee's regular rate of pay.

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

2A- 13 OVERTIME AUTHORIZATION BY COUNTY COMMISSIONER

The following rules are adopted by the Commissioners' Court of Atascosa County, concerning authorization for overtime and compensatory time and on-call duties:

Emergency Overtime. The Commissioners' Court hereby authorizes each County Commissioner to declare an emergency and approve emergency overtime. Emergency overtime or compensation time authorized shall be reported to the County Auditor and at the next the Commissioners' Court meeting with a statement that describes the emergency. An emergency is an unforeseeable event that constitutes an immediate threat to life or property.

Violations of Overtime Rules. Any violation of these overtime rules shall be reported in writing to the Commissioners' Court.

Unbudgeted Overtime. A Commissioner shall not authorize an employee to incur overtime or compensatory time above any budgeted amount in the current county budget. An employee shall not work overtime or compensatory time above any budgeted amount in the current county budget. Before authorizing any overtime or compensatory time, a commissioner or other supervisor shall confirm with the County Auditor that budgeted overtime is available.

Procedures/Rules

Non-exempt employees shall be entitled to earn overtime compensation at one and one-half (1½) times their regular rate of pay for time actually worked in excess of forty (40) hours per week. Such overtime compensation may be paid in cash (subject to the availability of budgeted funds) or in compensatory time upon the agreement of the employee and the Commissioner, the provisions of this section.

For purposes of this policy, paid vacation or sick leave, personal leave time and other approved paid leave time **shall not be considered time worked.** Whenever an employee is required to work overtime in a week where he/she has taken sick leave or paid leave time, other than specified above, in excess of the employee's normally scheduled workweek shall be compensated at straight time rates or as compensatory time (if requested by employee and agreed by the Commissionerl) until a total forty (40) hours actually worked has been reached.

The Commissioner may, in lieu of cash payments for all actual hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours per week, award compensatory time calculated at one and one-half (1½) times the excess hours worked. The accumulation of compensatory time should not exceed 40 hours for non-law enforcement employees.

Any employee required to work on one of the recognized County Holidays is entitled to receive compensation at the rate of one and one-half (1½) times his or her usual rate of pay for any hours worked on the holiday (not to exceed eight hours), in addition to receiving his or her regular holiday pay. The premium rate of pay (1½ times the regular rate) shall not be considered in determining an employee's regular rate of pay for the purposes of calculating overtime compensation which may accrue in such workweek.

All accrued compensatory time must be paid out in cash in the following instances:

When an employee is promoted from a non-exempt position to an exempt position;

Nothing herein shall prohibit the County from paying out or paying down the compensatory time balance of any employee at any time.

Compensatory time earned is not transferable between employees.

A Commissioner may require an employee to use accumulated compensatory time when it is in the best interests of the County. Otherwise, an employee may schedule compensatory time off when it is not disruptive to the business interests of the County, and the Commissioner must grant the time off within a reasonable period of time.

All questions concerning hours worked, overtime compensation, exempt/non-exempt status or any other matters covered by the FLSA should be directed to the Human Resources Department.

On-Call Duties

Certain positions as designated by the Commissioners will be on an on-call status. On-call status may require an employee to carry a phone or to leave a number where they can be reached.

If the employees designated as on-call are free to pursue their own activities and the only stipulation is that they be available for on-call duties, as required, then they will not be compensated for any time while on-call.

If an on-call status employee is directed to perform their duties, then they will be compensated for all time spent performing their duties from the time they leave their home or other location to the directed area assigned until they return to their home or previous location.

Obligation to Work Overtime

All Atascosa County employees are required to work overtime when requested by management, unless the employee has a valid excuse acceptable to the County.

2A-14 BUSINESS TRAVEL EXPENSES

Atascosa County will reimburse employees for reasonable business travel expenses incurred while on assignments away from the normal work location. All business travel must be approved in advance by the department head or elected officials. Employees with approved travel are responsible for their own travel arrangements. Employees are expected to limit expenses to reasonable amounts. Expenses that generally will be reimbursed are:

A. Air or train fare for travel in coach or economy class or the lowest available fare.
B. Car rental fees, only for compact or mid-sized cars.
C. Fares for shuttle or airport bus service or other public ground travel.
D. Taxi fares, only when there is no less expensive alternative.
E. Mileage costs for use of personal cars, only when less expensive transportation is not available.
F. Cost of standard accommodations in low to mid- priced hotels, motels, or similar lodging.
G. Meals are only paid when an invoice for overnight hotel bill is submitted in conjunction with county business.
H. Charges for telephone calls, fax, and similar charges required for business purposes.

The per diem rate for meals is $59.00 per day for each full day and $44.25 per day for each travel day to and from the function. The only exception is that this policy is not to conflict with the Sheriff's Day meal policy for transport officers.

If two (2) or more employees are traveling to the same location, they should travel together to avoid unnecessary expenses. When traveling together, only one employee will receive mileage reimbursement. With prior approval, an employee may travel with a companion at no expense to the county and if the presence of a companion doesn't interfere with the business objectives. Employees are permitted to combine personal travel and business travel if the time away from work is pre-approved by the department head or elected official.

Reimbursement for travel expenses is due to the Auditors Office with fifteen (15) days, must present receipts and department head or elected official approval to complete the request.

If an employee who is subject to the overtime provisions of FLSA travels overnight on business (more than one (1) day), they will be paid for time spent traveling (except for meal periods) during their "normal working hours," on their non-working days such as Saturdays, Sundays, or holidays, as well as time spent during their normal working days. Travel time spent as a passenger on an airplane, train, bus, or car "outside of regular working hours" is not considered work time.

In cases where a rental car is used, employees are required to obtain auto liability coverage from the rental car company for the period of the rental. County Officials and Employees who receive automobile allowances are provided with these allowances for travel within the county. In the event one (1) of these officials or employees is required to travel outside the county, they are entitled to reimbursement for actual expenses for such trip(s) provided the travel was authorized. Employees or Officials who receive monthly automobile allowances are not eligible for per-mile reimbursement for travel within the county. Travel allowances are considered to be a "taxable fringe benefit".

The Commissioners Court establishes the rate for mileage reimbursement annually. All approved mileage expenses are reimbursed to the employee at the current rate for the year. To receive mileage reimbursement, the employee must report the shortest distance between the points of departure and destination. Travel from an employee's residence to a county office is not eligible for reimbursement.

Falsification of any travel expense will lead to disciplinary action, up to and including, termination.

2A-15 USE OF COUNTY CREDIT CARDS

Credit cards are issued to authorized employees by their department head or elected official who is responsible for monitoring the proper use of the credit card. The credit cards may be used to pay for authorized expenditures when conducting business for the county. When utilizing the credit card for food service, the amount of the purchase, as shown on the credit card receipt, will be the authorized payment. In those cases where the tip is figured into the bill due to the number of participants, the total bill will be paid. Unauthorized or personal use of

county credit cards is strictly prohibited any may result in disciplinary action, up to and including, termination and is also subject to prosecution within extent of the law.

2A-16 HIRING POLICY revised 9.28.26

Atascosa County values the backgrounds, experiences, skills, and knowledge that comes to us from all applicants and employees. The purpose of this policy is to ensure an equal employment opportunity and fair treatment to all candidates and employees without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, sex (including pregnancy), age, disability, sexual orientation, transgender, gender identity, gender expression, or political affiliation. The policy is intended to outline the hiring practices of Atascosa County.

- **All job vacancies must be submitted to Human Resources for review and approval prior to being posted or advertised. HR is solely responsible for reviewing job descriptions, confirming classification and pay grade, ensuring budget approval, and posting all employment opportunities. Departments and managers are not authorized to independently advertise, post, or circulate job openings without prior review and approval from Human Resources. All applications and resumes must be forwarded to the HR department for retention purposes. Each department head and elected official is responsible for selecting candidates to fill each vacant position within the pay limits set by the budget. The following process must be followed by all department heads and elected officials for the onboarding of selected candidates (see note):If the department head is interested in recruiting current county employees, the position must be posted internally for a minimum of five (5) days before posting externally. If posting externally, the position must be posted for a minimum of ten (10) days prior to closing.**
    - **Posting internally requires all department heads or elected officials to print the job opportunity and post in a common area of the office for all employees to see.**
- **The department head or elected official must hold interviews for selected candidates.**
- **Once selected, the department head or elected official must submit the new hire coversheet and application to the human resources office for the completion of the remainder of the onboarding process.**
- **The human resources office will email the candidate a conditional offer of employment, pre-screening forms, the request for the background check, and the benefits overview.**
- **The background check must be completed prior to moving forward. A 48-hour deadline for pre-screenings pertains to all candidates.**
- **Once the pre-screenings, drug test and physical, and background check results are satisfactorily returned, HR will send the candidate a welcome email with details for their first day and their new hire packet.**
- **The hiring manager will receive notification that the employee has met all hiring requirements and can then be put on the next upcoming Commissioner Court agenda for approval.**

Note:

- **All candidates being sent for pre-screenings, to include drug testing and physical, must complete the request within 48-hour deadline. Failure to complete the request will result in**

retracting of the conditional offer and the candidate will be placed on the do not hire list.

This policy does not apply to the Sheriff's Department and Juvenile Detention Center.

Hiring of Department Heads

When a position for a department head is open, the job posting must be advertised on the county website for a minimum of 15 days prior to closing. After advertising, should three (3) or more applicants apply, a committee must be formed consisting of at least one (1) member of Commissioners Court, an employee from the specific department, and the County Auditor. The hiring committee must interview the applicants and choose their top three (3) candidates to present before the Commissioners Court for interview and final selection by Court vote. The Elections Administrator position must be filled by appointment of the County Elections Commissions per Section 31.032 of the Texas Election Code. The Chief Public Defender position must be filled by the Board of Directors for the Public Defender's Office.

Employee Medical Examination and Pre-Screenings

To ensure that all employees are able to perform the essential functions of their position, a medical examination is required for all employees, with the exception of seasonal election personnel and seasonal summer interns. The pre-screening process includes a medical examination, drug, and alcohol screening as a requirement for onboarding. Candidates completing their pre-screenings will go to a health provider of Atascosa County's choosing. In the event an individual cannot satisfactorily pass their pre-screenings, their conditional offer of employment will be withdrawn.

All new and rehired employees are placed on a 90-day probationary period. All employees, whether new or rehired, are subject to additional departmental probationary periods in conjunction with the County 90-day probationary period.

2A-17 EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION

Atascosa County is committed to employing only those who are legally authorized to work in the United States. Atascosa County does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of citizenship or national origin and is responsible for verifying the identity and work authorization and eligibility of individuals hired after November 6, 1986.

As a condition of employment, all employees hired by Atascosa County after November 6, 1986, must complete and have on file with the Human Resources Department, an I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification. Atascosa County verifies employment eligibility with the use of E-Verify. Inability to verify employment eligibility or ineligible results will result in immediate termination of employment.

2A-18 DEMOTIONS revised 4.27.26

Demotions are the movement of an employee from one position to another with a decreased responsibility or complexity of job duties or to a lower salary. Elected officials, appointed officials or department heads may choose to demote or re-assign any employees who are unable to meet performance requirements, for disciplinary reasons or for any other reason as deemed necessary by the official. Upon demotion, an employee's salary may be adjusted downward.

Any employee demoted will be placed on a 90-day probationary period. Any employee demoted is subject to additional departmental probationary periods in conjunction with the County 90-day probationary period.

2A-19 TRANSFERS revised 4.27.26

Transfers are the lateral movement of an employee from one position to another with the same responsibility or complexity of job duties with no change in salary.

Elected officials, appointed officials or department heads may transfer an employee in their department to a vacant position. All transfers must be handled in accordance with the budget adopted by the Commissioners' Court.

Any employee transferring to another department will be placed on a 90-day probationary period. Any employee transferring is subject to additional departmental probationary periods in conjunction with the County 90-day probationary period.

2A-20 PROMOTIONS revised 4.27.26

Promotions are the movement of an employee from one position to another with an increased responsibility or complexity of job duties, and to a higher salary.

Elected officials, appointed officials or department heads may promote an employee in their department to a vacant position. All promotions must be handled in accordance with the budget adopted by the Commissioners Court.

Any employee being promoted will be placed on a 90-day probationary period. Any employee that is promoted is subject to additional departmental probationary periods in conjunction with the County 90-day probationary period.

2A-21 SEPARATIONS revised 7.13.26

A separation shall be defined as any situation in which the employer-employee relationship between the County and a County employee end. Upon separation from employment with the County, an employee's years of service will not be retained or reinstated. Any prior service credit, including but not limited to longevity pay, will no longer be recognized if the individual is rehired at a later date. Reemployment with the County will be considered a new period of service for all applicable purposes.

All separations from Atascosa County shall be designated as one of the following types:

1) termination; 2) resignation; 3) retirement; 4) dismissal; 5) administrative separation; 6) reduction in force; or 7) death.

1) Termination

Termination for any reason will result in disqualification of unused, accrued vacation and longevity payout. In the event an employee is terminated from employment, the department head and elected official will work with the Human Resources Director to identify if the employee shall be placed on the "Ineligible for Rehire" list due to Atascosa County policy violations or violations of state or federal law.

Employees may be considered for termination for any of the causes outlined in Policy 1B-15, Disciplinary Action, as well as any other conduct or circumstances that adversely affect County operations, public trust, workplace safety, or the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the position.

2) Resignation

A resignation shall be classified as any situation in which an employee voluntarily leaves their employment with Atascosa County, and the separation does not fall into one of the other categories. Employees who are resigning should submit a written two-week courtesy notification to their supervisor. Employees who submit a written resignation and work the duration of their two-week notice period, will be paid any unused, accrued vacation hours and their accrued longevity in their final pay. Employees who do not work their full resignation period will forfeit payout of their unused, accrued vacation. Sick and Personal leave will not be paid out. Atascosa County reserves the right to accelerate the last day of employment following an accepted two-week resignation. In the event of acceleration, an employee will still receive their unused, accrued vacation time. Once a two-week resignation is accepted, the Department Head or Elected Official may deny a request to revoke the resignation.

3) Retirement **revised 10.26.26**

A retirement shall be any situation in which an employee meets the requirements to collect benefits under the County's retirement program and voluntarily elects to leave employment with the County to do so. An employee who is retiring should notify their supervisor of that intent at least 30 days prior to the actual retirement date to help prevent delays in starting the payment of retirement benefits. Employees who retiree will be paid unused, accrued vacation up to forty (40) hours and their accrued longevity in their final pay.

4) Dismissal

A dismissal shall be any involuntary separation of employment that does not fall into one of the other categories of separation. Atascosa County is an "at-will" employer and a department head or elected official may dismiss an employee at any time for any legal reason or no reason, with or without notice.

Dismissal of any kind will result in disqualification of unused, accrued vacation and longevity payout. In the event an employee is involuntary separated from employment, the department head and elected official will work with the Human Resources Director to identify if the employee shall be placed on the "Ineligible for Rehire" list due to Atascosa County policy violations or violations of

state or federal law.

5) Administrative Separation

Administrative Separation is a non-disciplinary involuntary separation of employment when an employee is unable to perform the essential functions of their position. The Human Resources Department and Elected Official or Department Head will determine the separation at the conclusion of the interactive process. Employees who are administratively separated will be paid out unused, accrued vacation up to forty (40) hours and their accrued longevity in their final pay.

An employee may be administratively separated for reasons including, but not limited to:

- Inability to perform the essential functions of the position, with or without reasonable accommodations, as determined through the interactive process.
- Failure to meet medical, physical, psychological, or fitness-for-duty requirements as required by law or the position. Sheriff Department refer to the internal TCOLE policy and requirements for fitness-for-duty.
- Permanent restrictions that prevent the employee from performing the essential functions of the position.
- Any other circumstance in which continued employment is not feasible and the separation is not disciplinary in nature.

Determination for administrative separation is evaluated consistent with applicable laws including:

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA);
- Workers' Compensation laws; and
- Any other applicable federal or state requirements.

Employees who are administratively separated are designated as eligible for rehire should they be able to perform all essential functions of the position in which they're applying for with or without accommodations. Employees who wish to be rehired must follow the steps outlined in the 2A-16 Hiring Policy.

Nothing in this policy alters the at-will nature of employment with Atascosa County.

6) Reduction in Force

An employee shall be separated from employment because of a reduction in force when their position is abolished or when there is a lack of funds to support the position or there is a lack of work to justify the position. Any employee who is separated due to reduction in force will remain eligible for rehire. Employees who are separated due to a reduction in force will be paid out unused, accrued vacation up to forty (40) hours and their accrued longevity in their final pay.

7) Death

A separation by death shall occur when an individual dies while currently employed by the County. If an employee dies while still employed by the County, their legally designated

beneficiary or estate shall receive all earned pay and payable benefits.

2A-22 RETIREE REHIRES

Retired employees shall be eligible to apply for open positions with Atascosa County as long as the following provisions are met: 1) The retiree has been retired for at least one calendar month, 2) No prior arrangement or agreement was made between Atascosa County and the retiree for re-employment, and 3) strict adherence to normal leaving employment procedures were followed at the time of the employee's retirement.

The retiree must have a bona fide separation of employment and have been retired for a minimum of one calendar months. A bona fide separation means there is no prior agreement or understanding between Atascosa County and the retiree that the retiree would be rehired after retirement. According to Rule 107.4 adopted by the TCDRS Board of Trustees, restrictions apply to elected officials, people employed for the same or different position in the same or different department, employee status changes, and independent contractors.

Newly elected officials who have recently retired from the county cannot draw their retirement because they have an arrangement to return to work for the county. Employees also cannot retire with an agreement to go work in a different department or different position. Changing employee status does not matter when determining if someone is still working for the county. Also, an employee cannot retire from the county with an arrangement to begin work as an independent contractor either.

Rehired retirees who did not have a bona fide separation of employment may owe a 10 percent excise tax and be required to repay all of their monthly retirement payments. Abusing the retirement provisions in such a manner would violate a qualification requirement for retirement plans under Section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, potentially resulting in significant tax consequences for the employer, its participating members and those retired employees.

Any retiree who meets all other TCDRS requirements, who is rehired consistent with this policy, must establish a new membership with TCDRS and will be considered a new member for the purposes of beneficiary determination and benefit selections.

B. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

2B-1 HEALTH AND DENTAL PLANS

All full-time regular employees of Atascosa County shall be eligible for the group medical plan and dental plan benefits. Regular variable hour employees who work an average of thirty (30) or more hours a week in the measurement period will be eligible for health insurance after the measurement period. Regular part-time, temporary seasonal, temporary short term part-time, and regular variable hour employees who work an average of less than thirty (30) hours a week

in the measurement period will not be eligible for health insurance.

Premiums for the coverage for eligible employees shall be paid entirely by the County.

Eligible employees may cover their qualified dependents by paying the specific premium for the dependents. Deductions for dependent coverage shall be made through payroll deduction from the employee's paycheck each pay period.

Details of coverage under the group medical insurance plan and dental plan are available in the County Human Resources Office and may be obtained during the normal working hours for that office.

Employees who leave the employment of Atascosa County or who lose their coverage eligibility, may be eligible for an extension of the medical plan for themselves and their eligible dependents under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA). If an employee is unable to return to work following FMLA leave, if eligible, they will be offered COBRA. Atascosa County COBRA coverage is administered by Blue Cross Blue Shield. Upon separation from Atascosa County, an eligible employee will receive the required information from Blue Cross Blue Shield and should contact them if requiring information.

Employees are responsible for notifying the human resources department upon a change of coverage for their defendants (ex. Divorce).

2B-2 OTHER PLANS – LIFE, SUPPLEMENTAL

Atascosa County provides supplemental insurance coverage through AFLAC. All supplemental insurance coverage premiums are the responsibility of the employee. Information regarding these supplemental insurances may be obtained from Human Resources.

2B-3 VACATION

Full-time employees are eligible to earn and use vacation time as described in the policy. Part-time, temporary, and seasonal employees are not eligible for vacation benefits.

The amount of paid vacation time employees receives each year increases with length of their employment as shown in the schedule below and are deposited on the employees work anniversary date. All employees will accrue vacation time based on the number of hours in their shifts, ensuring equity in time off. The vacation time allotment for employees on 8-hour, 12-hour, and 24-hour shifts are show below:

Full-time non-exempt employees must use vacation time in half-hour increments. Full-time exempt employees must use full hour increments.

For employees working 8-hour shifts:

Years of Service	Vacation Hours	Vacation Days
After one (1) year	Forty (40) hours	5 days
After two (2) years	Eighty (80) hours	10 days
After ten (10) years	One hundred twenty (120) hours	15 days
After twenty (20) years	One hundred sixty (160) hours	20 days

For Employees working 12-hour shifts:

Years of Service	Vacation Hours	Vacation Days
After one (1) year	Forty (60) hours	5 days
After two (2) years	Eighty (120) hours	10 days
After ten (10) years	One hundred twenty (180) hours	15 days
After twenty (20) years	One hundred sixty (240) hours	20 days

For employees working 24-hour shifts:

Years of Service	Vacation Hours	Vacation Days
After one (1) year	Forty (120) hours	5 days
After two (2) years	Eighty (240) hours	10 days
After ten (10) years	One hundred twenty (360) hours	15 days
After twenty (20) years	One hundred sixty (480) hours	20 days

Note:

- a day of vacation is defined as the employee's shift schedule (8 hours, 12hours, or 24 hours)
- Vacation accrual is granted on the anniversary of the employee's hire date and will be calculated according to the appropriate number of hours or days as per the above chart.

All regular full-time employees will be eligible for vacation benefits after completing one full year of service. On the anniversary of the employees hire date each year, employees will receive the appropriate amount of vacation hours based on their length of service. Employees will have one full year from their anniversary date to utilize the vacation time they have accrued. Vacation time must be used within this 12-month period, and any unused vacation will not carry over to the next year.

Scheduling of vacations shall be at the discretion of the individual official or department head.

Employees shall only be able to use vacation which has already been accrued and shall not be allowed to borrow vacation against possible future accruals. Employees shall not be allowed to receive pay for vacation in lieu of taking time off.

If a holiday falls during an employee's vacation, then the employee will not be charged for the vacation.

Each employee shall be responsible for accurately recording all vacation time used on their time sheet.

Vacation leave will only be paid at the employees' regular rate and cannot be used towards overtime.

2B-4 VACATION BUY BACK

All regular full-time employees are eligible for vacation buy-back benefits upon completion of ten (10) years of continuous service with the county.

The amount of vacation buy-back pay, or leave will be determined by the action of the Commissioners' Court (currently, the vacation buy-back pay is forty (40) hours compensation or forty (40) hours vacation time-off).

An eligible employee must notify their supervisor of their intent to buy-back their vacation hours. The employee must then notify human resources at least within thirty (30) days from the payroll date in which they want the buy-back to apply to. Vacation time may be bought back at any point during the employees anniversary year.

An eligible employee may exercise the privilege of converting the cash payment into forty (40) hours of vacation leave. The earned time-off must be taken during the anniversary year after first becoming eligible. Any subsequent earned vacation leave may be taken during the calendar year. Vacation leave is not cumulative from year to year. Employees must request the vacation buy-back thirty (30) days prior to the anniversary date.

Transition hours are not eligible for vacation buy-back.

2B-5 SICK

Full-time employees are eligible to earn and use vacation time as described in the policy. Part-time, temporary, and seasonal employees are not eligible for vacation benefits.

Eligible employees shall accrue sick leave at a rate of twelve (12) hours per month. Accrual of sick leave shall start on the first day of the month following the completion of the employee's ninety (90) day probationary period. Sick leave shall not be accrued while an employee is on leave without pay.

The maximum amount of unused sick leave an employee shall be allowed to have at any time is three hundred sixty (360) hours.

Sick leave may be used for the following purposes: 1) illness or injury of the employee; 2) appointments with physicians, optometrists, dentists, and other qualified medical professionals; or 3) to attend to the illness or injury of a member of the employee's immediate family. For purposes of this policy, immediate family shall be defined as spouse, child, parent, foster child or other relative living in the employee's home who is dependent on the employee for care.

Where sick leave is to be used for medical appointments, an employee shall be required to notify their supervisor of the intent to use sick leave as soon as the employee knows of the appointment. Where use of sick leave is not known in advance, an employee shall notify their supervisor of the intent to use sick leave as soon as possible but no later than within 15 minutes of the employee's normal time to begin work, when practicable. Where it is not practicable to notify the supervisor within 15 minutes of the normal starting time, the employee should notify their supervisor as soon as is reasonably practicable. If the employee feels that the situation will cause the employee to miss more than one day of work, the employee should notify their supervisor of the anticipated length of absence. The employee will be placed on FMLA, if event and employee is eligible. If an employee uses three (3) or more consecutive days of sick leave, the supervisor shall have the right to require a physician's statement or some other acceptable documentation of injury or illness, for either the employee's own illness or the illness of an immediate family member. Employees who have a pattern of abusing sick leave may be required to provide a physician's statement for those absences as required by their supervisor.

Employees shall not be allowed to borrow sick leave against future accruals. Employees shall not be paid for unused sick leave at the termination of employment.

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

Sick leave will only be paid at the employee's regular rate and cannot be used towards overtime. Sick leave will cease to accrue once an employee becomes eligible for and begins an approved leave of absence under FMLA. Sick leave will resume upon the employee's return to work.

2B-6 SICK DONATION POOL

The purpose of the sick donation pool program is to allow employees to voluntarily donate a portion of their accrued sick hours to the pool at any time to assist other employees who are experiencing a qualifying sick leave/medical related issue or a personal emergency that will require them to be absent from work.

Recipients of sick leave donations are limited to a maximum of 240 hours per calendar year.

In order to qualify for the sick donation program, the employee needing sick donations must meet the following requirements:

- Have an FMLA qualifying serious illness or injury (common illnesses and birth or placement of a child does not qualify). Physician's Statement form WH-380-E required.
- Employee has suffered the death of an immediate family member
- To attend to the illness or injury of a member of the employee's immediate family. (Physician's Statement form WH-380-F required)

Note: for the purpose of this policy, an immediate family member is defined as a spouse, child, grandchild, sibling, parent, grandparent, or any relative residing in the employee's home who is dependent on the employee for care.

Eligibility to request sick leave donations:

- Present qualifying documentation (medical documentation) for their reason for leave
- Exhaust all other means of pay

Eligibility to donate sick leave:

- Must be a full-time employee
- Have a minimum balance of 120 hours
- Maintain a minimum balance of 80 hours following donation

Process to request donations:

1. Submit the request to Human Resources and their department head or elected official. If the employee is unable to do so, the department head or elected official may submit the application to Human Resources on the employee's behalf.
2. Once received in HR, HR will contact the employee for further information on the leave request and obtain the required documentation. Department heads and elected officials cannot request medical information from the employee.
3. Following completion of necessary documentation, HR will submit the request to the County Judge for final approval.
4. Following approval, HR will send a notice to the employee and their department head or elected official that the request has been approved. Hours needed for the duration of the approved leave must be added to the timecard as Sick Donations.
5. The employee must present a return-to-work notice listing restrictions prior to returning.

Process to donate sick leave:

1. Submit the Sick Donation Form to the department head, elected official, or HR.
2. Once received by HR, the transfer and distribution of hours will occur.
3. Maintain an available balance of 80 hours following the donation.

In the event that the sick donation pool is less than 120 hours, HR will send a mass email out to employees requesting more hours be donated to ensure hours are available to employees in time of need. Sick donations are completely voluntary and in no way may employees be required or coerced to donate their available sick leave hours.

2B-7 HOLIDAY

Full-time employees are eligible to earn and use vacation time as described in the policy. Part-time, temporary, and seasonal employees are not eligible for vacation benefits.
The County holidays shall be determined by the Atascosa County Commissioners' Court.

If a paid holiday occurs during a previously scheduled vacation, that day shall be paid as a holiday and not be charged against the employee's vacation balance. If an employee calls in sick on a paid holiday, they will forfeit their holiday pay and be charged from their sick leave. If an employee is on-call and calls in sick on a holiday, they will forfeit their holiday pay and be charged from their sick leave. An employee shall not be allowed to take a day off with pay prior to a holiday in anticipation of working on the holiday.

If an employee earns compensatory time and is scheduled to work or called in to work on a holiday because of an emergency, or other special needs of the County, the hours worked will be added to their compensatory time balance based on their status as exempt or non exempt hourly or salary.

Special consideration shall be given to employees requesting time off for religious or other special observances which are not designated as paid holidays for Atascosa County. Each supervisor is responsible for granting this leave based on the needs of their individual departments. Vacation, compensatory time, or leave without pay may be used for special leave granted.

Holidays do not accrue and if they are not taken, they will not be paid at separation of employment.

2B-8 FLOATING HOLIDAY

The purpose of this policy is to provide all full-time employees with flexibility in observing birthdays or personal observations that are not currently included in the County's current regular holiday schedule.

Effective January 1, 2026, all full-time employees are eligible to use one (1) floating holiday per calendar year, given on January 1 of each year. All new hires hired after January 1, will receive the floating holiday upon hire. Floating Holidays must be used within the same calendar year and cannot be carried over to the following year. Unused floating holidays will not be paid out upon separation from the county.

Eligible employees may use the floating holiday at any time during the year, subject to approval from their elected official or department head with a thirty (30) day advanced notice. Elected officials and department heads retain the right to deny the request for the floating holiday if there is a legitimate business need but must allow the employee to take it at another time within the year.

Eligible employees must record the floating holiday through TimeClock Plus.

2B-9 JURY DUTY revised 3.9.26

All employees of Atascosa County who are called for jury duty shall receive their regular pay for the period they are called for jury duty, which includes both the jury selection process and, if selected, the time they serve on the jury.

Pay for serving on a jury shall only include the time the employee would have normally been scheduled to work and will not include extra pay if jury service involves time outside the employee's normal work schedule. Any fees paid for jury service may be kept by the employee.

If an employee is released from jury duty during their normal working schedule, the employee is required to report to their shift immediately or will forfeit the jury duty pay.

All employees who are subpoenaed or ordered to attend court to appear as a witness or to testify in some official capacity on behalf of the County shall be entitled to leave with pay for such period as their court attendance may require. If an employee is absent from work to appear in private litigation in which they are a principal party, the time shall be charged to vacation, other eligible paid leave, or leave without pay.

2B-10 PERSONAL LEAVE

A maximum of twenty-four (24) hours or three (3) days will be allowed with pay for personal leave on a year-to-year basis (calendar year) only. Full-time employees shall be paid at the regular salary rate for time on leave when warranted by unforeseen circumstances not otherwise provided for in this policy.

The Department Head will determine the qualification of the emergency on a case-by-case basis. The decision of the Department Head shall be final. Additional time, if allowed by the Department Head, will be charged to vacation, compensatory time-off, or time-off without pay.

Equitable Allocation for Shift Workers: To ensure fairness among employees working different shifts, the allocation of personal leave hours will be adjusted according to the employee's shift schedule. Employees working 8-hour shifts will receive 24 hours of personal leave annually, which equates to 3 working days. Employees working 12-hour shifts will receive 36 hours of personal leave annually, which equates to 3 working days. Employees working 24-hour shifts will receive 72 hours of personal leave annually, which equates to 3 working days.

Accrual for New Employees: New employees will be given personal leave hours after 90 days of employment. After the initial 90-day period, employees will accrue personal leave on the 1st of January every year, moving forward.

2B-11 MILITARY LEAVE

All Atascosa County employees who are members of the National Guard or active reserve components of the United States Armed Forces shall be allowed up to fifteen (15) days off per federal fiscal year with pay for active duty or to attend active or inactive authorized training sessions and exercises. The fifteen (15) day 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 Federal Fiscal year. 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. An employee may use vacation leave, earned compensatory time, or leave without pay if they must attend Reserve or National Guard Training sessions or exercises in excess of the fifteen-day maximum.

During the fifteen (15) day duration, an employees health insurance benefits will continue at the same rate. Vacation, sick leave, and holiday benefits will continue to accrue during the fifteen (15) day duration that an employee is on miliary leave.

Employees are required to return to return to work for the first regularly scheduled shift after the end of the fifteen (15) day duration.

Any Atascosa County employee who is a member of the Texas military forces, a reserve component of the armed forces, or a member of a state or federally authorized urban search and rescue team called to state active duty by the governor or another appropriate authority in response to a disaster is entitled up to 7 days of paid disaster leave per fiscal year.

This leave is in addition to the paid leave provided for authorized training or duty otherwise authorized or ordered. During disaster leave under these provisions, the person may not be subjected to loss of time, efficiency rating, personal time, sick leave, or vacation time.

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

Upon request of the employee, Atascosa County will provide a statement that contains the number of workdays used for military leave in the fiscal year as well as a statement of the number of workdays left for use during the fiscal year.

Atascosa County employees who leave their positions because 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 state and federal laws in effect at the time of their release from duty. All reasonable efforts will be made to return eligible employees to their previous position or a comparable one.

2B-12 PAID QUARANTINE LEAVE

Atascosa County shall provide paid quarantine leave for fire fighters, peace officers, detention officers, and emergency medical technicians employed by Atascosa County and ordered by a supervisor or the health authority to quarantine or isolate due to a possible or known exposure to a communicable disease while on duty. This includes fire fighters, peace officers, detention officers and emergency medical technicians, as defined by this policy, who are employed by, appointed to, or elected to their position.

> "Detention officer" means an individual appointed or employed by a county as a county jailer or other individual responsible for the care and custody of individuals incarcerated in a county jail.
>
> "Emergency medical technician" means an individual who is certified as an emergency medical technician under Chapter 773, Health and Safety Code; and employed by the county.
>
> "Fire fighter" means a paid employee of a municipal fire department or emergency services district who holds a position that requires substantial knowledge of firefighting; has met the requirements for certification by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection under Chapter 419, Government Code; and performs a function listed in Section 143.003(4)(A).
>
> "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.
>
> "Peace officer" means an individual described by Article 2.12, Code of Criminal Procedure, who is elected for, employed by, or appointed by the county.

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; and, if applicable, shall be reimbursed for reasonable costs related to the quarantine, including lodging, medical, and transportation. An employee on qualifying paid quarantine leave will not have their leave balances reduced. Qualifying employees should discuss the above benefits with their direct report.

Off duty exposures will not be covered under this policy.

2B-13 62/30 RULE

Atascosa County recognizes the dedication and service for its long-tenured employees. In support of the longevity of employees and support of eligible retirees, effective January 1, 2026, the County will provide County-paid medical coverage to eligible retirees.

Eligible retirees must have worked for the County for a minimum of thirty (30) years and be at least sixty-two (62) years of age at the time of retirement. The coverage provided will then expire when the retiree reaches age sixty-five (65) and is then eligible for Medicare.

This coverage only applies to the monthly premium cost for the retiree only. If the retiree wishes to keep their eligible dependents covered, they are responsible for the additional cost associated with the additional coverage at the current rate of the County. Rates are subject to annual changes determined by the plan administrator and adopted by the Commissioners Court.

Atascosa County reserves the right to modify, amend, or rescind this policy at any time.

2B-14 RETIREMENT

All regular employees full time and part time employees shall be eligible for the retirement benefit offered through the Texas County and District Retirement System. Temporary and seasonal employees will not be eligible for retirement benefits. Eligible employees shall make contributions to the retirement program through a system of payroll deduction. Atascosa County shall make a contribution to each eligible employee's retirement account according to the requirements of TCDRS. Information on the retirement program may be obtained at the County Human Resources Office during the normal working hours for that office.

Employees retiring from County employment will qualify for recognition when they meet at least one of the following retirement eligibility requirements:

- Age 60 or older with at least 8 years of service.
- Any age with at least 30 years of service.
- Combined age and years of service totaling 75 or more.

Employees who meet these requirements will be formally recognized at Commissioners Court and presented with a retirement plaque. Resignation or separation from employment without meeting a retirement eligibility requirement does not qualify for retirement recognition under this procedure.

2B-15 SOCIAL SECURITY/MEDICARE

All County employees shall participate in the Social Security/Medicare program which provides certain retirement, disability, and other benefits. Deductions for these programs will be made from each paycheck.

2B-16 FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT/MILITARY FAMILY LEAVE (FMLA/MFL)

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) requires an employer to provide eligible employees with unpaid leave under certain circumstances. There are two types of leave available:

1) the basic 12-week FMLA entitlement; and
2) the Military Family Leave (MFL) entitlement described in this policy.

ELIGIBILITY:

To be eligible for benefits under this policy, an employee must:

1) have worked for Atascosa County at least 12 months (it is not required that these 12 months be consecutive; however, a continuous break in service of 7 years or more will not be counted toward the 12 months); **and**
2) have worked at least 1250 hours during the previous 12 months; **and**
3) are employed at a work site that has 50 or more employees within a 75-mile radius.

Any employees with any questions about their eligibility for FMLA leave should contact Human Resources for more information.

QUALIFYING EVENTS:

Family medical leave under this policy may be taken for the following reasons:

1) the birth of a child and to care for that child;
2) the placement of a child in the employee's home for adoption or foster care;
3) to care for a spouse, child (under the age of 18 or if over 18 incapable of self-care due to a disability), or parent with a serious health condition;
4) the serious health condition of the employee that makes the employee unable to perform the essential functions of their job;
5) a qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that an employee's spouse, child or parent is a covered military member of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve or National Guard), deployed to a foreign country or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty in a foreign country;
6) to care for a covered service member (Regular, Reserve or National Guard) with a serious injury or illness if the employee is the spouse, child, parent or next of kin (nearest blood relative) of the service member; or
7) to care for a covered veteran 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 period of 5 years preceding the date on which the veteran began that medical treatment, recuperation or therapy.

SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITION:

A serious health condition is defined as a health condition that requires overnight inpatient care at a hospital, hospice, or residential care medical facility or continuing treatment by a health care provider.

A serious health condition involving continuing treatment by a health care provider includes any one or more of the following:

1) a period of incapacity of more than three consecutive, full calendar days, and any subsequent treatment or period of incapacity relating to the same condition, that also involves:
    a) Treatment two or more times within 30 days of incapacity; or
    b) Treatment by a health care provider on at least one occasion within the first seven days of incapacity that results in a regimen of continuing treatment by a health care provider.
2) Any period of incapacity due to pregnancy or pre-natal care.
3) Any period of incapacity or treatment due to a chronic serious health condition that requires periodic visits to a health care provider and continues over an extended period of time.
4) Any period of incapacity that is permanent or long term due to a condition for which treatment is not effective.
5) Any period of incapacity or absence to receive multiple treatments by a health care provider.

QUALIFYING EXIGENCY LEAVE:

An eligible employee may be entitled to use up to 12 weeks of their FMLA leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Leave may be used if the employee's spouse, child of any age or parent 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:

1) short-notice deployment (up to seven days of leave);
2) attending certain military events and related activities;
3) arranging for alternative childcare;
4) addressing certain financial and legal arrangements;
5) periods of rest and recuperation for the covered military member (up to fifteen days of leave);
6) attending certain counseling sessions;
7) attending post-deployment activities (available for up to 90 days after the termination of the covered military member's active-duty status);
8) 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;
9) attending family support or assistance programs and informational briefings;
10) acting as the covered military member's representative before a governmental agency;
11) addressing issues that arise from the death of a covered military member while on active-duty status in a foreign country; and
12) 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 employee.

LENGTH OF LEAVE:

An employee may use up to 12 weeks leave per 12-month period under this policy. Atascosa

County sets the 12-month period used under this policy as the 12-month period measured forward from the date an employee's first FMLA leave begins.

A married couple who both work for the county is entitled to maximum combined leave of 12 weeks in any 12-month period for the birth of a healthy newborn child (i.e., bonding time) or placement of a child, or care for a parent with a serious health condition. The combined limit for a married couple employed by the county is 26 weeks in a single 12-month period if leave is to care for a covered service member or veteran with a serious injury or illness.

MILITARY CAREGIVER LEAVE:
An eligible employee 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 or 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 their duties due to a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty while on active duty 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 period of five years preceding the date on which the veteran undergoes that medical treatment, recuperation or therapy.

The MFL entitlement is applied on a per-injury basis and an eligible employee may be entitled to take more than one period of 26 weeks 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 weeks may be taken within any single 12-month period.

An eligible employee 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.

An employee does not need to use this 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 county's operations.

WORK RELATED INJURY:
Atascosa County will always designate qualifying work-related injuries with lost time as FMLA qualifying.

SUBSTITUTION OF PAID LEAVE:
Atascosa County requires substitution of paid leave for all FMLA or MFL events. An employee must follow the compensatory, vacation and sick leave policy guidelines. The balance of FMLA is unpaid leave. FMLA and MFL run concurrently with all substituted paid leave, including Workers' Compensation leave.

The maximum amount of paid and unpaid leave that may be used under this policy in a 12-month period is 12 weeks, except for qualifying leave to care for a covered military member with a serious injury or illness which is a maximum of 26-weeks in a 12-month period.

CONTINUED EMPLOYEE BENEFITS:
While an employee is on leave under this policy, the county will continue to pay the employee's medical plan premium at the same rate as if the employee had been actively at work. The employee is required to pay for dependent coverage and for any other coverage for which the employee would normally pay, or the coverage will be discontinued. An employee's obligation to pay for coverage will be made through regular payroll deduction while the employee is on paid leave status. While on unpaid leave, the employee is required to pay premiums due to the county no later than 30 days after the date of the pay period in which the premium comes due. The county may cancel unpaid coverage by providing the employee with advance written notice, not less than 15 days before the coverage will be cancelled for non-payment.

If the employee decides at any time after FMLA begins, that they will not return to work for Atascosa County, the employee must reimburse the county for health coverage premiums paid by the county on behalf of the employee during the FMLA period unless the determination for not returning is due to the serious health condition. This determination is subject to certification by a physician.

At the end of the 12-week leave period or the 26-week leave period in a single 12-month period to care for an injured covered military member, an eligible employee will be offered COBRA if they are unable to return to work.

INTERMITTENT LEAVE AND REDUCED SCHEDULE:
An employee may take intermittent leave under this policy if it is necessary for the care and treatment of a serious health condition of the employee, the employee's eligible family member or the care of a covered military member or veteran.

An employee may work a reduced schedule under this policy if it is necessary for the care and treatment of a serious health condition of the employee, the employee's eligible family

member, or the care of a covered military member or veteran.

All work time missed, as the result of intermittent leave or a reduced work schedule under this policy, will be deducted from the employees' 12-week or 26-week leave eligibility in a single 12-month period.

If an employee's request for intermittent leave is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment, the department head or elected official may require the employee to transfer temporarily to an alternative position with equivalent pay and benefits that better accommodates recurring periods of leave.

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:
The county has the right to ask for certification of the serious health condition of the employee or the employee's eligible family member when the employee requests or is using leave under this policy.

The county may send a request for medical certification to an employee who has been out of work for three or more days to determine the employee's FMLA eligibility. The employee is requested to have their physician complete and return the medical certification, or provide appropriate documentation, within 15 days of the employee's receipt of the form to be eligible for FMLA. An employee's failure to return the medical certification may result in denial of FMLA by the county.

The employee must respond to the county's request for certification within 15 days of receipt of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay in writing before the 15th day after receipt of the request. If an employee does not provide certification or otherwise respond, the county may deny leave under this policy.

If an employee requests intermittent leave or a reduced work schedule, the certification submitted must also include the dates and duration of treatment and a statement of medical necessity for taking intermittent leave or working a reduced schedule. The county may request re-certification for intermittent or reduced schedule leave every six months in connection with an eligible absence.

The county may ask for a second opinion from a health care provider of the county's choice, at the expense of the county, if the county has reason to question the certification, unless the leave is necessary to care for a seriously injured or ill covered service member supported by an invitational travel order (ITO) or invitational travel authorization (ITA) to join an injured or ill service member at their bedside.

If there is a conflict between the certification submitted by the employee and the second certification obtained by the county, the county may require a third certification, at the expense of the county, from a health care provider agreed upon by both the employee and the county. The third opinion is final and binding on the county and the employee.

REQUESTING LEAVE:
Unless FMLA leave is unforeseeable, an employee is required to submit a written request for leave under this policy to their immediate supervisor and contact the human resources department.

Where reasonably practicable, an employee should give their immediate supervisor a minimum of 30-days' notice before beginning leave under this policy. Where it is not reasonably practicable to give 30-days' notice, the employee is required to give as much notice as possible.

REINSTATEMENT:
An employee returning from leave under this policy, and who has not exceeded the 12-week maximum leave period allowed, will be returned to the same job or a job equivalent to the job the employee held before going on FMLA leave. An employee who has not exceeded the 26-week maximum leave period in a single 12-month period, allowed to care for a seriously ill or injured covered military member, will be returned to the same job or a job equivalent to the job the employee held before going on leave.

If an employee is placed in a different position, it will be one with equivalent status, pay, benefits, and other employment terms and which entails substantially equivalent skill, effort, responsibility, and authority.

The county has no obligation to reinstate an employee who takes more than the 12 weeks of leave allowed under this policy, or who elects not to return to work after using the maximum leave allowed, including an employee with available sick or vacation leave.

REPAYMENT OF BENEFITS:
Unless an employee is unable to return to work because of the serious medical condition of the employee or an eligible family member, or another situation beyond the control of the employee, an employee who does not return to work after using the maximum leave allowed under this policy will be required to reimburse the county for all medical premiums and other benefits paid by the county while the employee was on leave without pay related to their FMLA leave.

OTHER BENEFITS:
While on leave without pay under this policy, an employee does not earn vacation or sick leave, is not eligible for holiday pay, and does not earn other benefits afforded to employees actively at work, except as stated in this policy, unless other employees who go on leave without pay are allowed to do so.

An employee who is out on approved FMLA leave may not take trips outside of the country unless the travel is related to the employee's own serious health condition, the serious health condition of the child, spouse or parent of the employee or to attend qualifying military events. An employee may ask their immediate supervisor for written permission to take other trips outside of the country which may be granted at the supervisor's sole discretion.

Employees are forbidden from working another job while on approved FMLA leave from the county.

REGULATION:
Any area or issue regarding family and medical leave that is not addressed in this policy is subject to the basic requirements of the FMLA and the regulations issued to implement it.

RETURN-TO-WORK:
An employee is required to provide a fitness-for-duty certification before the employee returns to work.

ENFORCEMENT:
An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer for unlawful discrimination under the FMLA. The FMLA does not affect any federal or state law prohibiting discrimination or supersede any federal or state law that provides greater family medical leave rights.

2B-17 LEAVE OF ABSENCE - OTHER

Employees who have completed twelve (12) months of continuous service and have worked at least one thousand two hundred fifty (1250) hours during those months on a regular full-time employee position are eligible for leave without pay. Employees may request a personal leave of absence to a maximum of 90 days. Personal leaves of absence may include reasons such as extended vacations, continuing education, extended bereavement, or other personal matters. Personal leaves of absence are granted solely at the discretion of the elected official, appointed official or department head.

Employees who have been approved for unpaid leave must report to their department head or elected official at least once a month. Failure to provide medical status reports or to contact the office will result in revoking the leave and taking disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Employees on personal leaves of absence are converted to an inactive status and do not accrue any benefits. Employees may continue the county health plan, but they are responsible for the entire premium, which includes both their portion and the county portion. The employee must pay for the premium on the first of each month, lack of payment will result in medical plan termination and the employee will become eligible for COBRA. Return to work on a personal leave of absence is not guaranteed and is subject to current business conditions and an appropriate job opening. Failure to return to work at the expiration of the approved leave will result in voluntary resignation.

2B-18 ANNUAL LONGEVITY PAY revised 7.13.26

In an effort to attract and retain employees, Atascosa County provides longevity pay to eligible full-time employees in recognition of their continued service.

Full-time employees who have served three (3) consecutive years of employment with the County will earn annual longevity pay starting in their fourth (4) year of employment. The longevity pay is paid at $120.00 per year and will be disbursed on the payroll following the employee's anniversary date. There is no limit on the number of years an employee can accrue to qualify for longevity pay. Longevity pay calculations will be based on an employee's hire date within the calendar year.

Years of employment served as an elected official will not be considered for eligibility toward annual longevity pay. For elected officials, the years of service as an employee directly prior to becoming an elected official will be eligible for the annual longevity pay.

2B-19 YEARS OF SERVICE RECOGNITION

Employees who reach 30 years of service with Atascosa County will receive recognition during an annual ceremony held at either the State of the County event or Commissioners Court, as designated by Commissioners Court. Employees will be recognized once upon reaching this milestone.

Coordination and Responsibilities

1. **Department Notification:** The Department Head or elected official shall notify Human Resources of an upcoming eligible retirement as soon as the retirement date is confirmed.
2. **Eligibility Verification:** Human Resources shall verify retirement eligibility or completion of the 30-year County service milestone and confirm the employee's name, department, and service dates.
3. **Retirement Arrangements:** Human Resources shall coordinate the Commissioners Court recognition date, required agenda placement, and preparation of the retirement plaque.
4. **Annual Service Recognition:** Human Resources shall maintain a list of employees reaching 30 years of County service each calendar year and coordinate their recognition at the designated annual event.

An employee who receives 30-year service recognition remains eligible for separate retirement recognition upon an eligible retirement.