



# HUTCHINSON COUNTY

500 Main St., Stinnett, TX 79083



# PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL

*Revised: November 2022*

# RESOLUTION

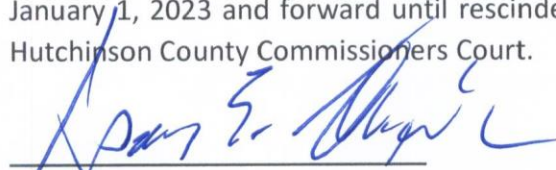
WHEREAS, Hutchinson County Officials desire to have a clear and understandable personnel policy manual for their employees and;

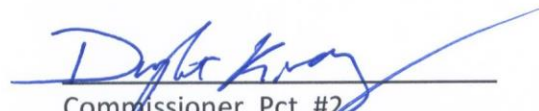
WHEREAS, the new policy manual will help Hutchinson County comply with current employment laws and standards, and;

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


WHEREAS, any and all previous personnel policy manuals are hereby rescinded and declared null and void.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that on this **Twenty-Eighth (28th) day of November 2022**, the Hutchinson County Commissioners Court does hereby adopt, accept, and place into effect this manual called the Hutchinson County Personnel Policy Manual, and it shall be in effect from January 1, 2023 and forward until rescinded or modified by official order of resolution of the Hutchinson County Commissioners Court.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner, Pct. # 1

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner, Pct. #2

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner, Pct. #3

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Commissioner, Pct. #4

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
County Judge

# HUTCHINSON COUNTY PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL

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# PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome!

It is with pleasure that we welcome you as a new employee of Hutchinson County. We hope you have a long rewarding career with us. As a County employee, you have a unique opportunity to serve the public- County residents, businesses and visitors to our County. We value employees who work hard, show initiative and responsibility, and take pride in their work and in the County as a whole.

You can get information or answers to your questions from your supervisor or by contacting the County Treasurer/ Personnel Office at 806-878-4010 or by stopping by the Treasurer's Office, Room 204, County Courthouse, Stinnett, which is open Monday thru Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Employees of Hutchinson County may be subject to additional or substitute policies of those stated here. The employee will follow the department guidelines and policies unless they conflict with state or federal laws.

The County includes the following departments (elected officials are in **bold**). All of these are defined in this document as department heads.

<b>County Judge</b>	County Auditor
<b>Commissioners</b>	Library
<b>Constable Precinct #1</b>	Maintenance
<b>Constable Precinct #2</b>	Juvenile Department
<b>County Clerk</b>	Extension Service
<b>County Attorney</b>	Adult Probation
<b>District Attorney</b>	Airport
<b>District Clerk</b>	Museum
<b>Justice of the Peace Precinct #1</b>	IT
<b>Justice of the Peace Precinct #2</b>	
<b>Sheriff</b>	
<b>Tax Assessor Collector</b>	
<b>Treasurer</b>	
<b>Judge 316<sup>th</sup> District Court</b>	
<b>Judge 84<sup>th</sup> District Court</b>	

The Commissioners Court reserves the right to change this document at any time.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**EMPLOYMENT AT-WILL STATEMENT**

1. All employees of Hutchinson County are considered to be “**at-will**” employees.
2. No contract of employment shall exist between any individual and Hutchinson County for any duration, either specified or unspecified.
3. This means the employment relationship may be ended at the will of the employer, Hutchinson County, or the employee at any time.
4. Employment may be terminated with or without cause and with or without notice at any time by the employee or employer.
5. Nothing in this manual or in any document or statement shall limit the right to terminate employment at-will.
6. No Elected Official or Department head has the authority to enter into an agreement for employment other than at-will employment.

## HUTCHINSON COUNTY POLICY ON EMPLOYEE STATUS

Each county position has an employee status that identifies how the position is paid and how benefits are granted by Commissioners Court. This policy defines both health insurance and retirement benefits. The status of an employee cannot be changed without the approval of the Commissioners Court. 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:**

1. A full time employee shall be any employee in a position who has a normal work schedule of at least thirty (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. Non-exempt employees are eligible for overtime compensation. Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime compensation. Hutchinson County makes exempt status determination based on the Fair Labor Standards Act.

### **REGULAR PART TIME:**

2. A part time employee shall be any employee in a position who has a normal work schedule of less than twenty-nine (29) 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:**

3. 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, lifeguards, summer mowers, and election workers. The county must define and document the season that the employee is being hired for. Seasonal employees can be either part time or fulltime, and they **(do/do not)** qualify for health insurance through the county under the Affordable Care Act. Temporary seasonal employees are not eligible for retirement benefits under TCDRS. Other county policies will dictate eligibility for other benefits.

### **REGULAR VARIABLE HOUR:**

4. 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.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY  
POLICY ON EMPLOYEE STATUS  
(CONT)**

**TEMPORARY PART TIME:**

5. A temporary short-term part-time employee shall be any employee who is expected to work less than twenty-nine (29) 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.

**AGE REQUIREMENTS:**

6. Persons under eighteen years of age will not be employed in full-time positions. Other age limitations will be only as required to comply with applicable state or federal law.



**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY**

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER:**

1. Hutchinson County is an equal opportunity employer. The county will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, including lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender status, genetic information, pregnancy, veteran status, and 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 or the county attorney.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT AMENDMENTS ACT**

**REASONABLE ACCOMODATION:**

1. It is the policy of Hutchinson County to prohibit any harassment of, or discriminatory treatment of employees on the basis of a disability or because an employee has requested a reasonable accommodation. If an employee feels he or she has been subject to such treatment, or has witnessed such treatment, the situation should be reported to your elected official, appointed official, department head 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.

2. It is Hutchinson County's policy to reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with disabilities unless the accommodation would impose 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 your elected official, appointed official, department head or the county attorney. Reasonable accommodation shall be determined through an interactive process of consultation.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT**

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

1. Announcements for job openings with Hutchinson County may include; but not limited to, advertisements in local newspapers or registration with the Texas Workforce Commission. Postings on all county buildings are required and County website [www.co.hutchinson.tx.us](http://www.co.hutchinson.tx.us). All announcements shall be posted at least 4 working days prior to the job closing.

**APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

2. Before an individual can be considered to be an applicant for employment with Hutchinson County, they shall be required to complete the steps outlined in the “Hutchinson County Application Procedure”. Copies of the “Hutchinson County Application Procedure” are available from the County Treasurer’s Office and may be picked up at any time during the normal working hours for that office. Job applications will be given only when a job opening exists.

**SELECTION**

3. Each elected or appointed official, or their designee, shall be responsible for selecting the applicant who they feel best meets the qualifications for an open position in their department.

**DISQUALIFICATION**

4. An applicant shall be disqualified from consideration for employment if the applicant:
- a. Does not meet the minimum qualifications necessary to perform the duties of the position for which they are applying.
  - b. Has made a false statement on the application form or any other related to or which has a bearing on the selection process.
  - c. Has committed or attempted to commit a fraudulent act at any stage of the application process.
  - d. Or not legally permitted to hold the position.

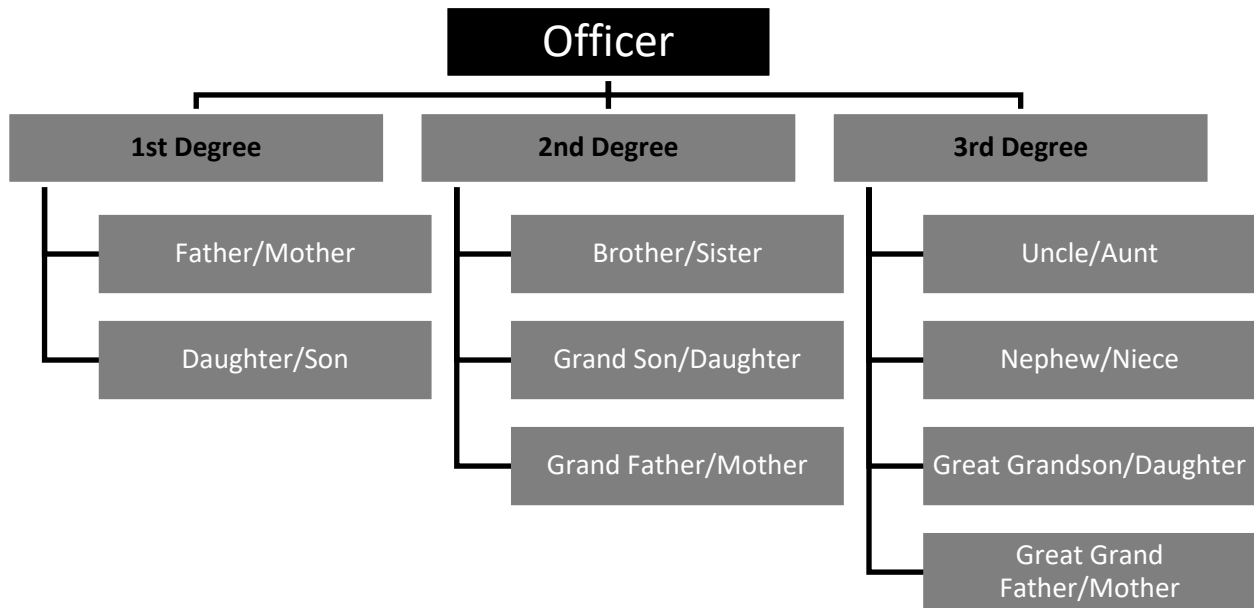
**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON HIRING OF RELATIVES**

**HIRING OF RELATIVES:**

1. In accordance with the Texas Nepotism Statutes (Texas Government Code 573), an elected or appointed official of Hutchinson County is prohibited from hiring a relative related in the third degree of consanguinity (blood) or the second degree of affinity (marriage) to work in a department which they supervise or exercise control over.
2. The civil law method, as approved by the Texas Legislature in 1991 to be effective in August of that year, shall be used for determining degree of relationship. (See the charts that follow).
3. Officer or Employee is the starting point from which all degrees of relationship are calculated.
4. Under the Degrees of Consanguinity, where Spouse is indicated, the relationship of the spouse is in the same degree as that of the person related by consanguinity, but the spouse is related only by affinity.

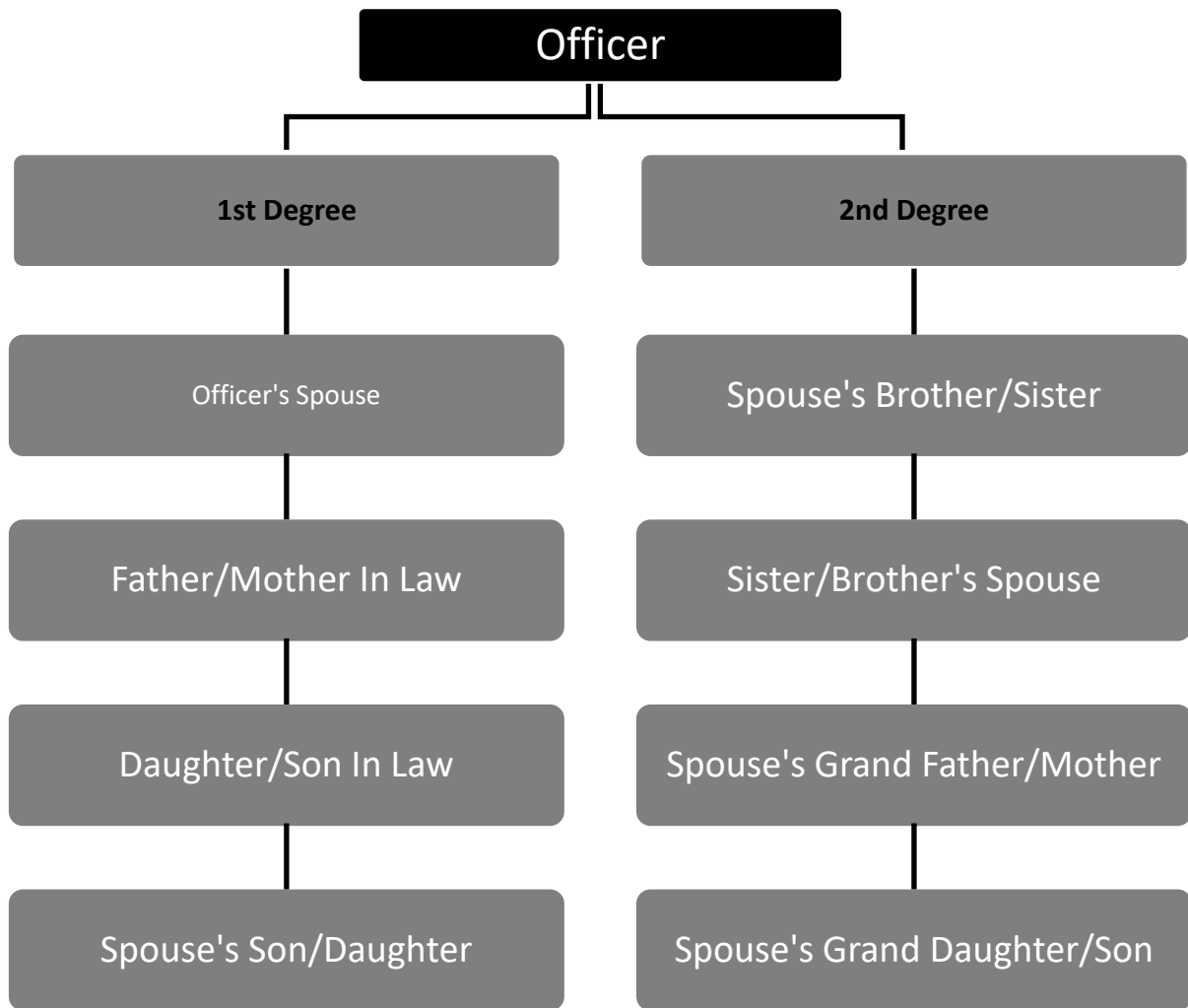
# CONSANGUINITY KINSHIP CHART

(Relationship by Blood)



# AFFINITY KINSHIP CHART

(Relationship by Marriage)



## **HUTCHINSON COUNTY POLICY ON VACATION**

### **ELIGIBILITY:**

1. All full-time employees shall be eligible for vacation benefits. Each employee shall be responsible for accurately recording all vacation time used on employee's time sheet.
2. Part-time and temporary employees shall not be eligible for vacation benefits.

### **ACCRUAL RATE:**

3. Vacation is earned after completing one year of continuous employment. Vacation is earned annually each December 31<sup>st</sup> thereafter.
4. Employees who have worked for less than one (1) year are not eligible for vacation.
5. Employees who have worked for more than one (1) year continuous, but less than seven (7) years shall earn eighty (80) hours of vacation time.
6. Employees who have worked seven (7) continuous years to fourteen (14) years shall earn one hundred twenty (120) hours of vacation time.
7. Employees who have worked fourteen (14) continuous years to twenty-one years (21) shall receive one hundred sixty (160) hours of vacation time.
8. Employees who have worked twenty-one (21) continuous years shall receive two hundred (200) hours of vacation time.
9. Vacation shall not be accrued while an employee is on leave without pay.
10. Maximum of forty (40) hours may be carried over to the following year.

### **PAY AT TERMINATION:**

11. Employees who have completed at least twelve (12) months of consecutive service with the County shall be paid for any unused vacation upon separation, provided it has been properly reported on their time sheets.
12. Employees who are separated before completing twelve (12) months of consecutive service shall not be entitled to payment.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY  
POLICY ON VACATION (CONT.)**

**DEFINITION OF WORKDAY:**

13. For purpose of this policy, a workday is defined as the normal number of hours an employee would be expected to work on a day, the employee is scheduled to work. In order to equalize the vacation benefit for all work schedules the following schedule will apply:

- a. An eligible employee who works a regular schedule of 10 hours per day would use 10 hours for 1 vacation day.
- b. An eligible employee who works a regular schedule of 12 hours would use 12 vacation hours for 1 vacation day.



**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON SICK LEAVE PAY**

All full-time employees hired and those officials holding office prior to January 1, 1991, will be paid for one-half of the total amount of accumulated sick leave not to exceed 424 hours in the following termination situations. The employee must have continuous employment to be eligible for pay.

1. Retirement
  
2. Employees not retained due to changes of elected officials
  
3. Employee's position is eliminated for budgetary reasons or forced reduction.
  
4. Appointed or Elected official fully completing their current term of office.
  
5. Death (paid to beneficiary)
  
6. Total disability

To be eligible to receive sick leave payments, evidence of earned sick leave must be documented by time sheets turned in monthly and on file in the office of the County Treasurer.

Employees under this sick leave pay regulations who voluntarily quit or are discharged as a result of disciplinary action are not eligible for sick leave pay.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY  
POLICY ON SICK LEAVE**

**ELIGIBILITY:**

1. All full-time employees shall be eligible for the sick leave benefit.

**ACCRUAL RATE:**

2. Eligible employees shall accrue sick leave at a rate of ten (10) hours per month.
3. All employees hired on or after January 1, 2023, the maximum amount of accrued sick leave an employee shall be allowed to carry over to the following year is four hundred and eighty (480) hours. Full-time employees and officials holding office prior to January 1, 2023, the maximum amount of accrued sick leave an employee shall be allowed to carry over to the following year is eight hundred and forty (840) hours.

**USE OF SICK LEAVE:**

4. Sick leave may be used for the following purposes:
  - a. Illness or injury of the employee
  - b. Appointments with physicians, optometrists, dentist, and other qualified medical professionals; and,
  - c. To attend to the illness or injury of a member of the employee's immediate family.
5. For purposes of this policy, immediate family shall be defined as spouse, children, father, mother, father-in-law, and mother-in-law.

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

**NOTIFICATION:**

6. 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.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY  
POLICY ON SICK LEAVE (CONT.)**

**NOTIFICATION (Cont.)**

7. Where use of sick leave is not known in advance, an employee shall notify their supervisor of the intent to use sick leave within 15 minutes of the employee's normal time to begin work, when possible.
8. Where it is not possible to notify the supervisor within 15 minutes of the normal starting time, the employee shall notify his or her supervisor as soon as is reasonably possible.
9. 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.

**DOCUMENTATION:**

10. If an employee uses two (2) or more consecutive days of sick leave, the supervisor shall have the right to require a physician's statement at any time.
11. Documentation requirements of this policy shall also apply in situations where the absence is for the care of a member of the immediate family.
12. If an employee uses sick leave during the two (2) weeks prior to resignation of employment with the county, the supervisor shall have the right to require a physician's statement or some other acceptable documentation of injury or illness.
13. Sick leave must be taken in one (1) hour increments.
14. Employees shall not be allowed to borrow sick leave against future accruals.
15. Employees deemed by their supervisor to be abusing the sick leave benefit can be required to bring a doctor's note for all absences.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY  
POLICY ON SICK LEAVE (CONT.)**

**USE OF SICK LEAVE:**

1. For purpose of this policy, a workday is defined as the normal number of hours an employee would be expected to work on a day they are scheduled to work.
2. In order to equalize the sick leave benefit for all work schedules the following schedule will apply:
  - a. An eligible employee who works a regular schedule of 10 or more hours would use 10 sick hours for 1 sick day.
  - b. An eligible employee who works a regular schedule of 12 hours would use 12 sick hours for 1 sick day.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON SICK LEAVE POOL**

**DEFINITIONS:**

1. The voluntary sick leave pool permits an employee to transfer forty (40) hours or if accrued less than forty (40) hours, total accrued hours, as of Dec. 1, to the county sick leave pool in a calendar year. To contribute time to the county sick leave pool, an employee must submit an application to the administrator in the form prescribed by the commissioner's court. An employee must also have one full calendar year of employment. Applications are available in the Hutchinson County Treasurer's office.
2. An employee is eligible to use time contributed to the county sick leave pool if, because of a catastrophic illness or injury and because of a previous donation of sick leave time to the pool. Also, the employee must have exhausted all their sick leave, vacation, and compensatory time to which the employee has earned. If an employee is receiving worker's compensation benefits they are not eligible.
3. An eligible employee may not use time in the county sick leave pool in an amount that exceeds the lesser of one-third of the total amount of time in the pool or up to 180 days. The committee shall determine the exact amount that an eligible employee may use.
4. An employee absent on sick leave assigned from the county sick leave pool is treated for all purposes as if the employee were absent on earned sick leave.
5. The estate of a deceased employee is not entitled to payment for unused sick leave acquired by that employee from the county sick leave pool.
6. An employee who is terminated or who resigns or retires may donate not more than eighty (80) hours of accrued sick leave to the pool.
7. An employee must contribute to the sick leave pool on their December timesheet to be eligible to withdraw from the pool the following year should they have a catastrophic injury or illness.
8. An employee can also use the sick leave pool for immediate family members. For purpose of sick leave pool policy, immediate family shall be defined as spouse, children under the age of 18 or children 100% disabled still living at home.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY  
POLICY ON SICK LEAVE POOL (CONT.)**

9. A “catastrophic illness or injury” is defined as a terminal, life-threatening, and/ or severe condition or combination of conditions affecting the mental or physical health of the employee that requires the services of a licensed healthcare practitioner for a prolonged period of time.

10. All usual circumstances will be approved or disapproved by the Commissioner’s Court.

11. The County Treasurer of Hutchinson County is appointed the Administrator of the Hutchinson County Voluntary Sick Leave Pool. All requests are reviewed by the Sick Leave Pool Committee.

12. The Hutchinson County Sick Leave Pool is in accordance with Sec. 157.071, Texas Local Government Code.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY QUARANTINE LEAVE**

**Paid Quarantine Leave for Fire Fighter, Peace Officers, Detention Officers, and Emergency Medical Technicians per HB 2073. (Effective June 15, 2021)**

**DEFINITIONS:**

1. Hutchinson County shall provide paid quarantine leave for the following employees of Hutchinson County, Fire Fighters, Peace Officers, Detention Officers, and Emergency Medical Technicians. A Supervisor or the Health Authority may order the above-mentioned employee 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.

**a. “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 the a county jail.

**b. “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.

**c. “Fire Fighter”** means a paid employee of a municipal or county 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 preforms a function listed in Section 143.003 (4) (A).

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

**e. “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.

2. Eligible employees who are on qualifying paid quarantine leave shall receive all employment benefits and compensations, 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.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY QUARANTINE LEAVE (Cont.)**

3. A qualifying employee should contact Hutchinson County Treasurer's office (806-878-4010) if they have questions concerning the above benefits.
  
4. Off duty exposures will not be covered under this policy.



**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON MENTAL HEALTH LEAVE FOR PEACE OFFICERS**

In accordance with Texas Government Code, HB 2073, and SB 1359. Hutchinson County shall provide paid mental health leave for Peace Officers who experience a traumatic event during the scope of their employment.

**DEFINITIONS:**

1. "Law Enforcement Agency" means an agency of the state or an agency of a political subdivision of the state authorized by law to employ peace officers.
2. "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.
3. "Traumatic Event" means an event which occurs in the peace officer(s) scope of employment when the officer is involved in the response to, or investigation of, and event that causes the officer to experience unusually strong emotional reactions or feelings which have the potential to interfere with their ability to function during or after the incident.

*Traumatic events may include, but are not limited to, the following:*

- a. Major disaster which may include response to weather related events involving multiple casualties; or explosions with multiple casualties; or search and recovery missions involving multiple casualties.
  - b. Incidents involving multiple casualties which may include shootings or traffic accidents;
  - c. Line of duty death or suicide of a department member;
  - d. Death of a child resulting from violence or neglect;
  - e. Officer(s) involved shooting of a person.
4. "Mental Health Leave" means administrative leave with pay granted in response to a traumatic event that occurred in the scope of the peace officer's employment.
  5. "Mental Health Professional" means a licensed social or mental health worker, counselor, psychotherapist, psychologist, or psychiatrist.

**PROCEDURE:**

6. An officer directly involved in a traumatic event may request the use of mental health leave. The request shall be made in writing through the chain of command. The request shall be treated as a priority matter and a decision on the granting of the leave shall be made no later than 24 hours following the submission of the request. The request shall be granted unless the chain the command can articulate specific compelling reasons to deny granting the leave.
  - a. An officer directly involved in a traumatic event may request up to three (3) working days of mental health leave to the Department Head/Elected Official or their designee.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON MENTAL HEALTH LEAVE FOR PEACE OFFICERS (Cont.)**

- b. Mental Health Leave will not count as time worked for overtime purposes.
- c. Any request for mental health leave shall be treated as strictly confidential by all parties involved and shall not be discussed or disclosed outside the officer's immediate chain of command, and only as necessary to facilitate the use of the leave. Any supervisor who becomes aware of the behavioral changes of an officer shall refer the individual to the Department Head/Elected Official or their designee. Any breach of this confidentiality shall be grounds for discipline.
- d. Confidentiality may be waived by the officer seeking mental health leave. Confidentiality may be waived under circumstances which indicate the officer is a danger to themselves or others and a department personnel must confer with mental health professionals.
- e. Peace Officers in need of Mental Health time are encouraged to contact Hutchinson County's Mental Health benefits through the county's Health Insurance Plan (if applicable), EAP services, and mental health services provided in the community.
- f. Mental Health Leave shall be requested within thirty (30) days of the traumatic event. No unused Mental Health Leave shall be carried forward into the next year nor shall any employee be compensated for Mental Health Leave upon termination of employment.

**ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES:**

- 7. This Policy will be implemented and administered collaboratively by the impacted departments; Treasurer's Office and the County Department's employing the Peace Officer.
- 8. All Departments that have an employee eligible for this leave must comply with all policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- 9. Personal trauma, such as family issues, or any other non-work-related issues are not included for use of such mental health leave.
- 10. The Commissioners Court, as a policy-making authority, may amend this policy as needed.

This policy is not intended to be a replacement for Hutchinson County Workers Compensation Policy or the Family and Medical Leave Act and will run concurrently with Workers Compensation and Family and Medical Leave, when necessary.

## HUTCHINSON COUNTY POLICY ON HOLIDAYS

### **ELIGIBILITY HOLIDAYS:**

1. All full-time employees shall be eligible for the paid holiday benefit.
2. The County holidays for the following calendar year shall be determined by the Hutchinson County Commissioners' Court by its first meeting of November.

### **HOLIDAY & VACATION:**

3. If a paid holiday occurs during the vacation of an eligible employee that employee shall be paid as a holiday and not be charged against the employee's vacation balance.

### **HOLIDAY ON DAY OFF:**

4. If a designated holiday falls on an eligible employee's day off, the employee shall be allowed to take another day off with pay during the next 90 days or the holiday will be forfeited.
5. An employee shall not be allowed to take a day off with pay prior to a holiday in anticipation of working on the holiday.

### **EMERGENCIES/SPECIAL NEED HOLIDAY WORK WEEK:**

6. An eligible employee called in to work on a holiday because of an emergency, or other special need of the County, shall be given straight compensation for the actual hours worked.

*Example: The employee worked physically 34 hours that holiday week and was awarded 10 hours for the holiday day. (Total 44 hours) The said employee will receive 4 hours toward their compensation time.*

### **SPECIAL OBSERVANCES:**

7. Special consideration shall be given to employees requesting time off for religious or other special observances which are not designated as paid holidays for the County.
8. Determination of granted leave under Section 7 of this policy shall be made by the Supervisor of the department in which the employee works, based on the needs of the department.
9. Vacation, compensatory time, or leave without pay may be used for leave granted under Section 7 of this policy.
10. Holidays do not accrue, and if not taken, they will not be paid at termination and/or retirement.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY  
POLICY ON JURY DUTY LEAVE**

**JURY DUTY:**

1. Employees of Hutchinson 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 actually serve on the jury.
2. 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.
3. Any fees paid for jury service may be kept by the employee.

**OFFICIAL COURT:**

4. If an employee is released by 11:30 a.m. or before the employee will be required to report to work for the remainder of the day.
5. 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.

**PRIVATE LITIGATION:**

6. If an employee is absent from work to appear in private litigation in which they are a principal party, this time shall be charged to vacation, other eligible paid leave, or leave without pay.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON MILITARY LEAVE**

**MILITARY LEAVE:**

1. All Hutchinson 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. A Federal Fiscal year is defined as October 1<sup>st</sup> through September 30<sup>th</sup>. Pay for attendance at the Reserve or National Guard training session or exercises shall be authorized only for periods 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 exercise in the excess of the fifteen-day maximum.
2. Any Hutchinson County employee who is a member of the Texas military forces, a serve 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.
3. An employee going on military leave shall provide their supervisor with a set of orders with two (2) business days after receiving them.
4. Upon request of the employee, Hutchinson 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.
5. Hutchinson 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.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON FUNERAL LEAVE**

**FAMILY FUNERAL LEAVE:**

1. Employees may be allowed up to three (3) days leave with pay for the death in the immediate family, as approved by the department head. The department head may determine the number of days by how far the employee must travel.
2. For purposes of this policy, immediate family shall include the employee's spouse, child, parent, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchildren, or "in-law".

**OTHER LEAVE:**

3. Employees may be allowed time off with pay to attend the funeral of a relative who is not a member of the immediate family or the funeral of a friend, as approved or allowed by the department head.

**ADDITIONAL LEAVE:**

4. If leave is needed beyond the limits set in this policy, it may be charged to available vacation or compensatory time or to leave without pay, as approved, or allowed by the department head.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON MEDICAL INSURANCE**

**ELIGIBILITY:**

1. All full-time employees of Hutchinson County shall be eligible for the group medical insurance benefit. Part-time employees are not eligible.
2. Premium for the coverage for eligible employees shall be paid in part by the County.

**DEPENDENT COVERAGE:**

3. Eligible employees may cover their qualified dependents by paying any required premium for the dependents. This can be established during open enrollment or qualifying event.
4. Deductions for the dependent coverage shall be made through payroll deduction from the employee's paycheck each pay period.

**LIFE INSURANCE:**

5. Employees shall have a limited amount of life insurance on themselves as part of the county's group medical insurance coverage.

**INFORMATION:**

6. Details of coverage under the group medical insurance plan are available in the County Treasurer's Office.
7. All retirees of Hutchinson County who are receiving a monthly county retirement check are eligible to continue in the County insurance program. Retirees under 65 years of age will continue with the insurance carrier which county employees have or over 65 years of age will be eligible for the county supplement policy. Retirees will be responsible for amount for monthly premiums, not covered by County. Such payment is to be made by the retiree by the twenty-fifth day of each month. Payment's delinquent more than thirty days may result in the cancellation of the retiree's health insurance policy.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON MEDICAL INSURANCE**  
**COBRA**

**DEFINITIONS:**

1. Continuation of Insurance Coverage (COBRA): The Federal Consolidated Omnibus Reconciliation Act (COBRA) provides that all employees are eligible to continue their group insurance coverage for up to eighteen (18) months when employment is terminated due to resignation, reduction of work force, or dismissal (for other than gross misconduct). The law entitles dependents of a covered employee to continue their group insurance coverage for up to thirty-six (36) months upon the termination of a covered employee; reduction of such employee's hour of employment; upon the death of the covered employee; divorce or legal separation; when dependent children are no longer eligible dependents, under the definition policy; and when the employee ceases to participate in the County's sponsored plan, if the employee is Medicare eligible. The employee or dependent must request continuation of coverage and must pay the full cost of coverage plus two percent (0.02%). This provision is based on the present law and is subject to change as applicable state and federal laws change. The employee/dependents' right to continuance of insurance coverage shall be governed by reference to federal and state law and the insurance policy.



**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON WORKER'S COMPENSATION**

**ELIGIBILITY**

1. All Hutchinson County employees are covered by worker's compensation insurance while on duty for the County. All workers compensation is handled by the Treasurer's office.

**BENEFITS**

2. Workers' compensation insurance pays for medical bills resulting from injury or illness an employee incurs while carrying out the duties of their job.
3. Workers' compensation also pays a Temporary Income Benefit (TIBS) for time lost from work in excess of seven calendar days as a result of eligible work-related injuries or illnesses. TIBS are payable beginning on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of lost time.

**ACCIDENT REPORTING**

4. Any employee who suffers a job-related illness or injury shall be required to notify their supervisor and the County Treasurer's office immediately.
5. Failure to promptly report job related injuries or illnesses may affect an employee's eligibility for benefits or delay benefit payments which are due.

**PHYSICIAN'S RELEASE**

6. An employee who has lost time because of a work-related accident or illness shall be required to provide a release from the attending physician before they are allowed to return to work.

**CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS:**

7. 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.
8. Hutchinson County counts an employee's leave due to a work-related injury or illness toward the 12 weeks leave entitlement under the Family Medical Leave Act.
9. An employee cannot collect worker's compensation payments and County pay for the same period of time.

## **HUTCHINSON COUNTY POLICY ON RETIREMENT**

### **ELIGIBILITY:**

1. All full time and part time employees are required to participate in the Texas County and District Retirement System, regardless of the number of hours they work in a year or their age. Temporary employees are excluded from enrollment in TCDRS.

### **CONTRIBUTIONS:**

2. Eligible employees shall make contributions to the retirement system through a payroll deduction each pay period.
3. Hutchinson County shall contribute to each eligible employees' retirement account in an amount to be determined annually by the Commissioner's Court.

### **INFORMATION:**

4. Information on the retirement program may be obtained in the Treasurer's office.
5. Refer to your Texas County and District Retirement System information handbook for more information.
6. Retired employees shall be eligible to apply for open positions with Hutchinson County as long as the following provisions are met: 1) The retiree has been retired for at least 12 calendar months, 2) No prior arrangement or agreement was made between Hutchinson 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.
7. The retiree must have a bona fide separation of employment and have been retired for a minimum of 12 calendar months. A bona fide separation means there is no prior agreement or understanding between Hutchinson 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.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON RETIREMENT (Cont.)**

8. 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.

9. 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.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY  
POLICY ON SOCIAL SECURITY**

**SOCIAL SECURITY:**

1. All County employees shall participate in the Federal Social Security program which provides certain disability, and other financial benefits.

**CONTRIBUTIONS:**

2. Contributions to this program shall be made by deductions from each employee's paycheck in accordance with the requirements of this program.
3. The County shall contribute in accordance with the requirements of this program.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE**

**ELIGIBILITY:**

1. To be eligible for benefits under this policy, an employee must:
  - a. Have worked for Hutchinson 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
  - b. Have worked at least 1250 hours during the previous 12 months.

**QUALIFYING EVENTS:**

2. Family or medical leave under this policy may be taken for the following situations:
  - a. The birth of a child and in order to care for that child; the placement of a child in the employee's home for adoption or foster care;
  - b. 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;
  - c. The serious health condition of the employee that make the employee unable to perform the essential functions of their job;
  - d. 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;
  - e. 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
  - f. 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:**

3. Serious health condition of the employee 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.
4. Serious health condition of a spouse, child, or parent is defined as a condition that requires overnight inpatient care at a hospital, hospice, or residential care medical facility, or a condition that requires continuing care by a licensed health care provider.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (Cont.)**

5. A serious health condition involving continuing treatment by a health care provider includes any one or more of the following:
- a. 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:
    - i. Treatment two or more times within 30 days of incapacity; or
    - ii. 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.
  - b. Any period of incapacity due to pregnancy or pre-natal care.
  - c. 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.
  - d. Any period of incapacity that is permanent or long term due to a condition for which treatment is not effective.
  - e. Any period of incapacity or absence to receive multiple treatments by a health care provider.

**QUALIFYING EXIGENCY LEAVE:**

6. Eligible employees may take FMLA/MFL exigency leave when an employee's covered military member (spouse, child of any age or parent) is on active-duty or called to active-duty status in a foreign country. Leave may be taken to:
- a. Address any issue that arises because the covered military member was given seven or fewer days' notice for active-duty deployment in support of a contingency operation.
  - b. Eligible employee may take up to seven days beginning on the date the covered military member receives the call or order to active duty.
  - c. Attend any official ceremony, program or event sponsored by the military that is related to the active-duty or call to active-duty status in a foreign country of a covered military member.
  - d. Attend family support or assistance programs and informational briefings sponsored or promoted by the military, military service organizations or the American Red Cross that are related to active-duty or call to active-duty status in a foreign country of a covered military member.
  - e. Arrange for alternative childcare, provide childcare on an urgent basis (not as routine), to attend school or daycare meetings, to enroll or transfer covered children under age 19 when it is necessitated by the active-duty or call to active-duty status of a covered military member.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (Cont.)**

- f. Make or update financial or legal arrangements to address the covered member's absence while on active-duty or call to active-duty status in a foreign country.
- g. Act as the covered military member's representative before a governmental agency to obtain, arrange or appeal military service benefits while the covered military member is on active-duty or call to active-duty status in a foreign country, for a period of 90 days following the termination of the covered member's active-duty status.
- h. Attend counseling provided by someone other than a health care provider for oneself, for the covered military member or covered child if the need for counseling arises from the active-duty status or call to active-duty status in a foreign country of a covered military member.
- i. For a maximum of 15 days each occurrence, to spend time with a covered military member who is on a short-term, temporary, rest and recuperation leave during leave during the period of deployment.
- j. Attend post-deployment activities for the covered military member for a period of 90 days following the termination of the covered member's active-duty status.
- k. Address issues that arise from the death of a covered military member while on active-duty status in a foreign country.
- l. Conduct certain activities related to the care of the military member's parent who is incapable of self-care where those activities arise from the military member's covered active duty.
- m. Address any other additional events that may arise out of the covered military member's active-duty or call to active-duty status in a foreign country if the County agrees the leave qualifies as an exigency and to both the timing and the duration of the leave.

**LENGTH ON LEAVE**

- 7. An employee may use up to 12 weeks leave per 12-month period under this policy. Hutchinson County sets the 12-month period used under this policy as a "rolling" 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee uses FMLA leave.
- 8. A married couple who both work for the county is entitled to a max combined leave of 12 weeks in any 12-month period for the birth or placement 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.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (Cont.)**

9. An eligible employee is entitled up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member or covered veteran with a serious injury or illness during a single 12-month period:
- a. The single 12-month period begins on the first day the eligible employee takes FMLA to care for covered service member or covered veteran and ends 12 months after that date.
  - b. An employee forfeits unused leave under this section if the eligible employee does not take all of their 26 weeks during this 12-month period to care for the covered service member or covered veteran is forfeited.
  - c. Leave entitlement under this section is applied on a per-injury basis. 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 member or veteran or to care for the same covered service member or veteran with a subsequent serious illness or injury. An employee may not take more than 26 weeks in any single 12-month period.

**WORK RELATED:**

10. Hutchinson County will always designate work-related injuries with lost time as FMLA qualifying.

**PAID AND UNPAID:**

11. If an employee has accrued leave, the employee is required to use their accrued leave as detailed below.

***Sick leave, Vacation, and Compensatory.*** The remainder of the leave shall be unpaid.

- a. An employee taking leave because of their own serious health condition, or the serious health condition of an eligible family member is required to first use ***Sick leave, Vacation, and Compensatory*** with the remainder of the 12-week leave period being unpaid leave.
- b. An employee taking leave for the birth of a child is required to use ***Sick leave, Vacation, and Compensatory*** for the recovery period after the birth of the child and before being placed on unpaid leave.
- c. After the recovery period from the birth of a child, an employee is required to first use ***Sick leave, Vacation, and Compensatory*** with the remainder of the 12-week leave period being unpaid leave.
- d. An employee taking leave for the placement of a child in the employee's home for adoption or foster care is required to use ***Sick leave, Vacation, and Compensatory*** with the remainder of the 12-week leave period being unpaid leave.



**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (Cont.)**

- e. An employee taking leave for a qualifying exigency for a covered military member is required to use ***Sick leave, Vacation, and Compensatory*** with the remainder of the 12-week leave period being unpaid leave.
- f. An employee taking leave for the care of a covered service member or veteran is required to first use ***Sick leave, Vacation, and Compensatory*** with the remainder of the 26-week leave period being unpaid leave.

12. 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:**

13. 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 employees 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 for 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 advance written notice, not less than 15 days before the coverage will be cancelled for non-payment.

14. 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:

- a. Offered COBRA if they are unable to return to work; or
- b. If approved by the commissioner's court and made part of this policy, the county can choose to continue to pay for the employee's health insurance premiums.***

**INTERMITTENT LEAVE AND REDUCED:**

15. An employee may only 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.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (Cont.)**

**SCHEDULE:**

16. An employee may only 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.

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

**CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:**

18. 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 leave under this policy.

19. The county shall 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 his or her physician complete and return the medical certification 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.

20. 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 15<sup>th</sup> day after receipt of the request. If an employee does not provide certification or otherwise respond, the county may deny leave under this policy.

21. An employee is required to provide certification of their serious health condition of the employee by having the employee's treating health care provider complete and submit an FMLA form WH-380-E. Also included with this form is the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination statement to be given to any and all health care providers.

22. An employee is required to provide certification of the serious health condition of an eligible family member by having the family member's treating health care provider complete and submit an FMLA form WH-380-F. Also included with this form is the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination statement to be given to any and all health care providers.

23. An employee is required to provide certification for leave taken because of a qualifying exigency by having the employee complete and submit an FMLA form WH-384. An employee is required to provide certification for leave taken for a serious injury or illness of a covered military member or veteran by having the member's or veteran's Department of Defense treating health care provider complete and submitted an FMLA form WH-385. The employee may also be required to provide the county with confirmation of the family or next of kin relationship to the seriously injured or ill covered military member or veteran.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (Cont.)**

24. 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.

25. 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.

26. 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:**

27. Unless FMLA leave is unforeseeable, an employee is required to submit a written request for leave under this policy to his or her immediate supervisor. 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:**

28. 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.

29. 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.

30. 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.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (Cont.)**

**REPAYMENT OF BENEFITS:**

31. 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 his or her FMLA leave.

**OTHER BENEFITS:**

32. 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.

33. An employee who is out on approved FMLA leave may not take trips outside of the county 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 county which may be granted at the supervisor's sole discretion.

34. If the county has a policy forbidding employees from working other jobs, an employee on approved FMLA leave may also be forbidden from working another job while on FMLA leave from the county.

**REGULATION:**

35. 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:**

36. An employee is required to provide a fitness-for-duty certification before the employee returns to work.

**ENFORCEMENT:**

37. 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 of medical leave rights.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON MILITARY FAMILY LEAVE**

On January 28, President Bush signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2008 (NDAA), Public Law 110-181. Section 585(a) of the NDAA amended the FMLA to provide eligible employees working for covered employers two important new leave rights related to military service:

**QUALIFYING REASON FOR LEAVE:**

1. Eligible employees are entitled to up to 12 weeks of leave because of “any qualifying exigency” arising out of the fact that the spouse, son, daughter, or parent of the employee is on active-duty or has been notified of an impending call to active-duty status, in support of a contingency operation. By the terms of the statute, this provision requires the Secretary of Labor to issue regulations defining “any qualifying exigency.” In the interim, employers are encouraged to provide this type of leave to qualifying employees.

**LEAVE ENTITLEMENT:**

2. An eligible employee who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a covered service member who is recovering from a serious illness or injury sustained in the line of duty on active-duty is entitled to up to 26 weeks of leave in a single 12-month period to care for the service member. This provision became effective immediately upon enactment. This military caregiver leave is available during “a single 12-month period” during which an eligible employee is entitled to a combined total of 26 weeks of all types of FMLA leave.

Additional information on the amendments and a version of Title I of the FMLA with the new statutory language incorporated is available on the FMLA amendments Web site at

[http://www.dol.gov/esa/whd/fmla/NDAA\\_fmla.htm](http://www.dol.gov/esa/whd/fmla/NDAA_fmla.htm).

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON ATTENDANCE AND TIMELINESS**

**ATTENDANCE:**

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

**TARDINESS:**

2. Each employee shall be at their place of work at the starting time set by their supervisor unless prior approval is given by the supervisor, or the employee is unable to be at work on time for reasons beyond the control of the employee.

3. Each employee shall remain on the job until the normal quitting time established by the supervisor unless permission to leave early is given by the supervisor.

**NOTIFICATION:**

4. If an employee is unable to be at work at their normal reporting time, the employee shall be responsible for notifying their supervisor as soon as is reasonably practicable of the circumstances causing the tardiness or absence.

**EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED:**

5. Each supervisor shall be 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.

6. Frequent unexcused absences or tardiness shall make an employee subject to disciplinary measures, up to and including termination of employment.

**ABANDON OF POSITION:**

7. An employee who does not report for work for three consecutive scheduled workdays, and who fails to notify their supervisor, shall be considered to have resigned their position by abandonment.

**WORK FROM HOME:**

8. Prior authorization from Elected Official/Department Head is required in writing before any employee can be paid for working from home. This documentation must be submitted to the Treasurer's office and/or attached to the employees' timesheets.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE, WEATHER CLOSING AND EMERGENCIES**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE:**

1. Administrative Leave is temporary paid absence from work which has been authorized by our County Judge or the overseeing Elected Official. Administrative Leave is typically used during investigations of alleged employee misconduct, but may occasionally be approved due to local emergencies, during office closures, or the purposes which are in the best interest of Hutchinson County.

**WEATHER AND EMERGENCY:**

2. As a general practice, Hutchinson 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. Public safety will be foremost in the development of departmental emergency action plans. However, each elected official controls the working hours of their employees, even in an emergency situation.

3. When the Hutchinson County Judge or designee officially closes an office due to adverse weather conditions, time shall be reported as follows:

- a. Administrative leave shall be granted for scheduled work hours missed during the closing. An employee shall not be required to use vacation hours for hours missed while the office was officially closed.
- b. Any employee in a non-emergency position who worked their scheduled hours while an office was officially closed, will report the hours as regular hours worked.
- c. Any employee who not was scheduled to work during the hours that the office was officially closed shall not receive administrative leave for the hours that the office was closed.
- d. Some county departments are continuous operating public safety and service departments. Some county personnel will be required to work during emergency closings. Each department head is responsible for designating their own employees and providing alternate information to personnel designated as essential during emergency closings.
- e. An employee who is unable to travel to work may be granted administrative leave for scheduled work hours missed when an office is not officially closed if a particular geographical area has widespread officially closed major roadways due to adverse weather conditions; and no practical alternative routes are available.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON LICENSE AND CERTIFICATIONS**

**LICENSE AND CERTIFICATIONS:**

1. Hutchinson 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 demoted, transferred or terminated. Under no circumstances will the employee be allowed to continue in the position where a license or certification is required if failure to have such license or certification is illegal under either Federal or State Law.



**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON COUNTY PROPERTY**

**RESPONSIBILITY:**

1. Each County employee shall be responsible for the care, maintenance, proper use, and upkeep of any vehicle, tool, or other County equipment assigned to them.
2. County employees shall only use equipment, vehicles, tools, and other County property that they are authorized to use.
3. An employee is responsible for regular maintenance on a county assigned Vehicle.

**PERSONAL USE:**

4. Personal use of County vehicles, equipment, supplies, tools, and any other County property shall not be permitted. This included but not limited using county vehicles for transportation; (i.e., kids, spouse, pets, personal shopping, personal errands.). **NOTE:** If personal use of a county vehicle is permitted, the employee will be subject to payroll taxes at the current IRS rate in accordance with IRS rules and regulations.

**D.L. LICENSES:**

5. A County employee who operates any County equipment or vehicle which requires a license shall be required to have a current active license for that vehicle or equipment any time they operate it.
6. Any employee who operates a vehicle or equipment which requires a license for legal operation shall notify their supervisor of any change in the status of that license.
7. An employee whose job involves operation of a vehicle or equipment requiring a license for its legal operation shall be subject to possible job change or termination if that license is suspended or revoked.
8. An employee whose job involves operation of a vehicle or equipment requiring a license for its legal operation, but who is deemed uninsurable by the County's vehicle insurance carrier even though the employee's license has not been revoked or suspended, shall be subject to possible job change or termination.

**ACCIDENTS:**

9. 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.
10. A copy of all accident and incident reports prepared by the employee shall be sent to the supervisor, the Loss Control Coordinator, County Auditor and County Treasurer.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY  
POLICY ON COUNTY PROPERTY (Cont.)**

**TELEPHONES/CELL PHONES:**

11. Hutchinson 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.
12. Hutchinson 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.
13. Hutchinson County bans all employees from texting while operating any county owned vehicle. County employees who are driving their own personal vehicle are also banned 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.
14. Employees in possession of a Hutchinson County owned cellular phone are required to take appropriate precautions to prevent theft and vandalism.
15. Each department may set their own rules and regulations regarding personal cell phone usage while at work.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON COMPUTER/INTERNET**

**DEFINITION:**

1. The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures concerning the installation, de-installation, maintenance, care, acquisition and use of County hardware and software. All hardware and software installations are to be directed through Information Technology department. This will ensure that all installations are compatible with existing systems and to insure minimal network problems. These procedures will safeguard the County network from possible computer virus infections, potential unauthorized use of county internet and e-mail accounts.

**MAINTENANCE:**

2. Maintenance of Computers is the responsibility of the IT personnel only. Employees should notify their supervisor of any maintenance problems and the supervisor will then notify IT personnel of the problem. Problems will be handled in a timely, efficient manner.

**CYBER SECURITY TRAINING:**

3. All County Employees that have county computer access, must comply with annual Cyber Security Training as of H.B. 3830. Department supervisor must provide employees with information to obtain their annual Cyber Security Training course. A certificate of completion must be filed with the county Treasurer's office.

**ACCEPTABLE USE:**

4. All County computers and internet is for County business and use by County employees only. Any work related to job responsibilities and communication with other departments of the County or State by e-mail.

**UNACCEPTABLE USE:**

5. All County computers and internet.
- a. Use of profanity, offensive or harassing remarks to co-workers or third parties, accessing, displaying, distributing pornographic sites, obscenities or sexually explicit material of any kind.
  - b. Copying or downloading any unauthorized software or copyrighted material.
  - c. Loading software for personal use on any County computer.
  - d. Using the system in such a manner as to create a breach of security.
  - e. Using the system for personal gain or any illegal purpose.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON COMPUTER/INTERNET (Cont.)**

- f. Forwarding messages with derogatory, inflammatory remarks or content regarding race, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, physical attributes, or sexual preferences.
- g. Knowingly or carelessly performing an act that will interfere with the normal operations of computers, terminals, peripherals, or networks.

**FILTERING:**

6. Filters are designed to track the usage patterns of the users. Filters assist in preventing viewing or sending any violent messages, profanity, nudity, sexual pictures or illegal activities. Filtering is monitored by IT personnel and recorded. Elected official or department head has the ability and may with or without advance notice, view usage and usage patterns of their staff.

**NO RIGHT OF PRIVACY/MONITORING:**

7. Users of the County internet system may not assume they are provided with any degree of anonymity. Employees have no right to privacy with regard to the County internet network system. Personal passwords are not an assurance of confidentiality. The internet itself is not secure. Persons should remember that all connections and sites visited on the internet or World Wide Web is monitored and recorded. This is for the safety and security of the County computer network system.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST:**

1. Employees of Hutchinson 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 a County Employee.
2. Employees involved in conflict-of-interest situations shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

**PROHIBITED:**

3. Activities which constitute a conflict of interest shall include but not be limited to:
  - a. Soliciting, accepting, or agreeing to accept a financial benefit, gift, or favor, other than from the County, that might reasonably tend to influence the employee's performance of duties for the County or that the employee knows or should know is offered with the intent to influence the employee's performance,
  - b. Accepting employment, compensation, gifts, or favors that might reasonably tend to induce the employee to disclose confidential information acquired in the performance of official duties,
  - c. Accepting outside employment, compensation, gifts, or favors that might reasonably tend to impair independence of judgment in performance of duties for the County,
  - d. Making any personal investment that might reasonably be expected to create a substantial conflict between the employee's private interest and their duties for the County.
  - e. Soliciting, accepting, or agreeing to accept a financial benefit from another person in exchange for having performed duties as a county employee in favor of that person.

**PRIOR APPROVAL:**

4. Employees must obtain prior approval from their department head before accepting or commencing outside employment or engaging in any activity which might result in a violation of this policy.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY  
POLICY ON POLITICAL ACTIVITY**

**POLITICAL ACTIVITY:**

1. Employees of Hutchinson County shall have the right to Support candidates of their choice and to engage in political activity during their personal time.
2. County employees shall not:
  - a. Use their official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the result of any election or nomination for office;
  - b. Directly or indirectly coerce, attempt to coerce, command, or advise another person to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value to a party, committee, organization, agency, or person for a political reason; or
  - c. Use any equipment, property or material owned by the County for political activity or engage in political activity while on duty for the County.

## **HUTCHINSON COUNTY POLICY ON SAFETY**

### **SAFETY STANDARDS:**

1. Each County employee shall be required to adhere to the general safety standards established for all employees and to all additional safety standards for their job or the department in which they work.

### **VIOLATIONS:**

2. Failure to follow the safety standards set by the County shall make an employee subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

3. An employee causing an accident resulting in major injury or death because of failure to follow safety standards shall be terminated.

### **REPORTING:**

4. Employees seeing unsafe working conditions shall either take steps to correct those conditions or report the unsafe conditions to the department head.

5. Any job-related injury to a County Employee requiring medical attention, must have an accident report form filled out immediately by the Department head, and reported to the Treasurer's Office.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON SAFETY -SEAT BELTS**

**DEFINITION:**

1. Hutchinson County recognizes that seat belts are extremely effective in preventing injuries and loss of life. We care about our employees and want to make sure that no one is injured or killed in a tragedy that could have been prevented by the use of seat belts. Therefore, seat belts shall always be used by both drivers and passengers while traveling on official county business. Employees are strongly encouraged to use their seat belts off the job as well.

**APPLICATION:**

2. The seat belt use policy applies to all employees and occupants of any vehicle driven by employees, including rentals and personal vehicles when used on official county business.

**RESPONSIBILITY:**

3. Elected officials and supervisors must demonstrate their commitment to this policy by communicating it to their employees, monitoring compliance, evaluating effectiveness, and taking disciplinary action against violations.

**BELT SYSTEMS MAINTENANCE:**

4. Seat belts in all Hutchinson County vehicles are to be maintained so that they are clean and in good working order.

**ENFORCEMENT:**

5. Seat belt use is such a common, healthy practice that the need to actively enforce this policy should be rare. However, the policy will be enforced the same as other Hutchinson County rules, and employees who violate it will be subject to disciplinary actions which may include dismissal. Elected officials and supervisors have an obligation to encourage and routinely monitor usage. The driver of the vehicle is responsible for enforcing seat belt use by all occupants.



**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON EMPLOYEE HARASSMENT**

**POLICY:**

1. Hutchinson County is committed to providing a working environment free from sexual, racial, or other forms of unlawful discrimination or harassment. Such conduct will not be tolerated and constitutes grounds for dismissal.
2. Any employee who feels they have been subjected to, or observes any instance of harassment, shall file a complaint with their direct supervisor. If the employee does not feel comfortable filing the complaint with their supervisor, they may file the complaint with the County Attorney or District Attorney.
3. Every incident reported will be thoroughly investigated and will be treated in as confidential manner as possible during and after the investigation of the complaint. If it is found that an employee has subjected another employee to harassment in violation of this policy, they will be subject to discipline, including termination.

**HARASSMENT:**

4. It shall be the policy of Hutchinson County to provide a workplace free from all forms of illegal harassment for all employees and to take active steps to eliminate any form of harassment which the County becomes aware.
5. Employees engaging in any form of harassment shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

**POLICY:**

1. Sexual harassment is strictly prohibited by Hutchinson County, whether committed by an elected official, department head, or co-worker. Hutchinson County does not tolerate harassment in the workplace of its employees by non-employees or other employees. It shall be the policy of Hutchinson 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.
2. Employees engaging in sexual harassment shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

**DEFINITION:**

3. 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:
  - a. Submission to such conduct is either an expressed or implied condition of employment.
  - b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for an employment decision affecting the harassed person; or
  - c. 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.

**CLAIMS:**

4. All claims of harassment shall be taken seriously and investigated promptly, thoroughly, and when possible, confidentially.
5. While all claims of harassment shall be handled with discretion, there can be no complete assurance of full confidentiality.
6. No retaliation or other adverse action shall be taken against an employee who, in good faith, files a claim of harassment.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY  
POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT (CONT.)**

**REPORTING:**

7. Employees who feel they have been harassed should immediately report the situation to the elected or appointed official who is responsible for the department in which they work.
8. If, for any reason, the employee feels that reporting the harassment to the department head may not be the best course of action, the report should be made to the County or District Attorney.
9. The official or Hutchinson County head, to whom a claim has been reported, shall be responsible for seeing that prompt action is taken to investigate the claim.
10. 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.
11. Employees should use the following procedures so that the 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 harassments to the elected Official or Appointed Official who is responsible for the employee's department or to the County or District Attorney.
  - d. If a thorough investigation reveals that unlawful harassment has occurred, Hutchinson County will take effective remedial action in accordance with the circumstances up to and including termination.
12. 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 harassment charges.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON OTHER RIGHTS/RESPONSIBILITIES**

**DRESS CODE:**

1. Officials and employees of the County shall wear appropriate attire for their respective positions as determined by the employee's department head. Suggested to add: Hutchinson County expects all employees to be well groomed, clean, and neat at all times. Each official or department head will determine the type of attire that is acceptable. Employees are required to always act in a professional manner and extend the highest courtesy to co-workers and to the public being served. A cheerful and positive attitude is essential to our commitment to customer service.

**POLICY ON TOBACCO USE:**

2. Hutchinson County is a tobacco free entity. Hutchinson County endeavors to provide a healthy environment. Therefore, **any form of tobacco or vaping consumed in county buildings and county vehicles is strictly prohibited.** Additionally, no smoking is allowed within twenty-five (25) feet of the exterior entranceways.

**BREAKS:**

3. 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. Hutchinson County supports the practice of expressing breast milk.

4. Hutchinson County will provide reasonable paid breaks for a nursing mother to express breast milk. The nursing mother will be allowed whatever time is needed to express breast milk.

5. 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.

6. Hutchinson 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.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON OTHER RIGHTS/RESPONSIBILITIES (Cont.)**

7. 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.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON PAY PERIOD AND TIME SHEETS**

**PAY PERIOD:**

1. The pay period for Hutchinson County shall be monthly, with checks being mailed or directly deposited on the last day of the month.
2. If a payday falls on a holiday or a weekend, paychecks shall be mailed, or directly deposited on the last workday immediately preceding the holiday or weekend.

**TIME SHEETS:**

3. Each employee shall be required to maintain a daily time sheet to be turned into his/ her supervisor on the last day of each pay period. The supervisor shall then turn in all time sheets to the County Treasurer's office by the 4<sup>th</sup> working day following the end of the pay period.
4. The time sheet prepared by the employee shall show an accurate record of all time worked and leave taken, whether paid or unpaid, for the pay period. Time sheets are governmental documents and as such required accurate and truthful information.

**FALSIFYING A TIMESHEET, A GOVERNMENTAL RECORD, IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE.**

**PAY ADVANCES:**

5. Advances in pay shall not be made to any employee for any reason.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON COMPENSATION**

**APPLICATION:**

1. This policy shall apply to all County employees except law enforcement employees.
2. Compensation for law enforcement employees shall be handled in accordance with the policies established in the Sheriff's Department with the approval of the Commissioner's Court. (207K)

**SALARIED EMPLOYEES:**

3. All County employees shall be paid a salary monthly at 173.33 hours-based on 2080 hours annually.
4. For full time employees, the monthly salary compensates the employee for all hours worked up to 40 in any work week.
5. For part time employees, the monthly salary compensates the employee for all hours worked in a work week up to the amount designated by the County for the position.
6. Salaried employees shall be paid all their monthly salary each pay day. Except when no leave is available or full day docking for disciplinary reasons.

**PERSONNEL FILES:**

7. The Hutchinson County Treasurer's department will retain basic employee information in an individual personnel file. This file will include all pertinent employment documents such as resume, application, DL, SS Cards, Banking Records, as well as records concerning performance, discipline and compensation.
8. It is important that the personnel records of Hutchinson County be accurate at all times. In order to avoid issues, compromising your benefit eligibility or having W2's returned, Hutchinson County requires employees to promptly notify the Treasurer's office and sign a change form that will be made available of any change in name, home address, telephone number, marital status, number of dependents, or of any other pertinent information.
9. The Public Information Act allows county employees to keep their home addresses, home 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 completing the Public Information Election Form during the new hire process in the Treasurer's office.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON LONGEVITY PAY**

**ELIGIBILITY:**

1. All full-time employees shall be eligible for the longevity pay benefit. Should an employee leave employment with the County and return in later months or years, they will not receive longevity pay for past employment with the County.
2. Longevity pay shall equal \$5.00 per month for each completed full year of employment. (Example: After an employee completes the initial one year of employment in an eligible position, the longevity pay for the next 12 months shall be \$60.00 based on 12 months at \$5.00 per month. The longevity pay at the end of two years will be \$120.00 based on 24 months at \$5.00 per month.)
3. Longevity will be paid after an elected official or employee has worked for one full year. Such payment will start at the beginning of the next fiscal year (October 1) after being a full-time employee for one full year.



**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS**

**REQUIRED DEDUCTIONS:**

1. Deductions shall be made from each employee's paycheck for Federal withholding, Social Security, Medicare, and any other deductions required by law.
  
2. Employees eligible for membership in the Texas County and District Retirement System shall have their contributions to that system deducted from each paycheck. Employee contribution is 7% of gross pay.
  
3. Any optional deduction authorized by the Commissioner's Court and approved by the employee shall also be deducted from the employee's paycheck.
  
4. Optional deductions approved by Commissioner's Court will only be deducted from the employee's paycheck if a written authorization for the deduction is turned in to the Treasurer's Office.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON WORK SCHEDULE AND WORKWEEK**

**WORK SCHEDULE:**

1. The normal hours of work for most positions in the County shall be from 8:00a.m. until 6:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. However, an elected official can determine the hours of work for their departments.

**EXCEPTIONS:**

2. 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.

3. The need for schedules that vary from the normal schedule shall be determined by each department head.

**WORKDAY:**

4. The workday for the County shall begin at 12:01 a.m. each day and end 24 consecutive hours later.

**WORKWEEK:**

5. For purposes of recordkeeping and to determine overtime in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the workweek for Hutchinson County shall begin at 12:00 a.m. on each Saturday and ends on the following Friday at 11:59 p.m.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON HOURS WORKED AND OVERTIME**

**HOURS WORKED:**

1. Hours worked shall include all time actually spent in the service of the County as defined in the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and its regulations.

**OVERTIME APPLICATION:**

2. Overtime, as defined by this policy, shall apply to all employees eligible for overtime compensation under the FLSA, except for law enforcement employees.

3. Overtime for law enforcement employees is defined under Section 207 (k) Fair Labors Standard Act as adopted by Commissioner's Court and addressed in the Sherriff's Department policy.

4. Overtime shall include all time actually worked for the County in excess of 40 hours in any workweek.

5. Sick leave, vacation, holiday and compensatory time shall not be counted in determining if overtime has been worked in any workweek. Compensatory time is calculated based on actual time worked

6. Except in emergency situations, an employee shall be required to have authorization from their supervisor before working overtime.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON OVERTIME COMPENSATION**

**POLICY APPLICATION:**

1. This policy shall apply to all County employees eligible for overtime compensation under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) except for law enforcement employees.
2. Overtime for law enforcement employees shall be handled in accordance with the policy for overtime compensation established by the Sheriff's Department, in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

**OVERTIME COMPENSATION:**

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

**MAXIMUM COMPENSATORY TIME:**

5. The maximum amount of unused compensatory time an employee shall be allowed to have at the end of any pay period is forty (40) hours. For any pay period an employee has over forty (40) hours compensatory time the employee will be required to reduce compensatory time to under forty (40) hours the coming month. Any deduction from this policy will be addressed by Commissioner's Court.

**USE OF COMPENSATORY TIME**

6. Employee shall be required to use compensatory time prior to the usage of vacation time. All request for leave shall be subject to approval by the department head based on the timeliness of the request and the needs of the department.
7. Compensatory time may be used for any purpose desired by the employee.
8. The Department Head shall retain the right to control the accumulation and disbursement of compensatory time

**USE OF COMPENSATORY TIME IF TERMINATED:**

9. 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.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON OVERTIME COMPENSATION (CONT.)**

**CASH PAYMENT FOR OVERTIME:**

10. The County shall retain the right to pay all, or part of the overtime worked in any work week by paying for that overtime at one and one-half (1 ½) the employee's regular rate of pay.

**RECORDKEEPING:**

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

12. The County Treasurer shall be responsible for keeping records of all compensatory time earned and used by each eligible County employee in their department and shall update the balance due to each employee at the end of each pay period.

**OTHER ISSUES:**

13. Any issues on overtime compensation not addressed in this policy shall at least meet the minimum requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act and the regulations issued by the Department of Labor to administer that Act.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON PROMOTIONS AND/OR DEMOTIONS**

**DEMOTIONS:**

1. 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.
2. 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.

**PROMOTIONS:**

3. 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.
4. 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 Commissioners Court.

## HUTCHINSON COUNTY POLICY ON GRIEVANCES

### PROCEDURE:

1. Any employee having a grievance related to his/her job should discuss the grievance with their immediate supervisor.
  
2. If the discussion with the immediate supervisor does not resolve the grievance, and, if the immediate supervisor is not the elected or appointed official with final responsibility for the employee's department, the employee shall have the right to discuss the grievance with that official.
  - a. Regarding the departments that report directly to the Commissioners Court. (Road & Bridge, Airport, Maintenance, Information Technology, Museum, Library, Building and Grounds, and Commissioners) The Commissioner Court will appoint a Grievance Officer(s) from the court to serve on a two-year term. (Officer(s) can serve consecutive terms as necessary) The Grievance Officer(s) will serve as a point of contact for the employee filing a grievance. The officer(s) will serve the court to conduct an investigation into the grievance, serve as a mediator for employee and supervisor of said department, and will inform the Court of resolution and/or next actions necessary regarding reported grievance. Note: Grievance officer(s) does not have the authority from the Court to speak on behalf of the Court or enforce disciplinary actions of any sort. The officer(s) can only operate under the expressed county policy and procedures as well as serve as a liaison between the employees/supervisors involved. Commissioners Court retain final say/action in all situations as necessary. Attached to this page is the Hutchinson County Grievance System/Procedure as well as the Grievance Form.

*Grievance Forms are available in each department, Court House Mailroom, Borger Annex Mailroom, and in the department's breakrooms. Digital Forms are available at the county website under forms or at request from the appointed Grievance Officer(s) via email or US Postal Service.*

3. The decision of the elected or appointed official with final responsibility for the employee's department shall be final in all grievances.

(The next 4 Pages are the Grievance System and Grievance Form)

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**COMMISSIONER'S COURT GRIEVANCE SYSTEM**

**PURPOSE:**

1. The purpose of the grievance procedure is to settle grievances between the County Employee(s) and/or County Departments that report directly to the Commissioner's Court for oversight as quickly as possible and at as low an administrative level as possible, so as to ensure efficient work operations and maintain employee morale. The following procedures are to be applied to the following departments and their employees; Library, I.T (Information Technology), Road & Bridge, Airport, Museum, Maintenance, County Facility Contractors, and Nuisance Abatement office.

***Note: Employees serving under an Elected Official Department must adhere to the policies for conflict resolution set by the Public Official elected to oversee those department/offices. (I. E but not limited to; Sheriff/Jail, Tax Assessor, County Clerk, Treasurer, District Clerk, J.Ps, Constables, County Judge, District Attorney, District Judge, County Attorney, and AG Extension). The Elected Official may utilize the services of Commissioner's Court appointed Grievance officer to help mediate a grievance, but all final action and decision rest solely on that of the Elected Official.***

"This system and the proceedings described herein are not intended to, and do not, replace or supplant filings or actions required to preserve or pursue rights under applicable law or regulations related to employment, including but not limited to claims required to be filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC"), the Texas Commission on Human Rights, or other authority/agency."

**ELIGIBILITY:**

2. Any regular full-time employee may process a personnel grievance, except those relating to pay increases. Probationary employees may file a grievance except those relating to their performance rating, demotion, and/or dismissal.

**SCOPE OF GRIEVANCE PRODEDURES**

3. The scopes of grievances that may be filed are limited to policies contained in this manual. If an employee believes that there has been a misapplication of policies or procedures that directly effect that employee or groups of employees, then the grievance filed should state the policy or procedure by policy number. The grievance should be put in writing and contain the remedy that is being sought. A personnel grievance may be filed by an employee, as defined above, on one or more of the following grounds:

- a. Improper application of rules, regulations, procedures, or policies of this manual.
- b. Unfair treatment, including coercion, restraint or reprisal;
- c. Discrimination because of race, religion, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, disability or political affiliation;
- d. Disciplinary actions taken against him/her without proper reason;
- e. Improper application of fringe benefits or improper working conditions.



**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**COMMISSIONER'S COURT GRIEVANCE SYSTEM (Cont.)**

f. Allegations of sexual harassment need not be handled through the grievance procedure but may be expeditiously handled through the sexual harassment policy.

**DEPARTMENTAL PROCEDURE**

4. Every effort should be made to resolve grievances with the employee and their supervisor and/or department head. The appointed Employee Grievance Officer(s) will be available to assist in the attempt to resolve grievances at this level.

5. If all attempts have failed to resolve the grievance at this level, then the employee shall promptly file a grievance to the Employee Grievance Officer(s). To be considered, a grievance must be filed in writing within Thirty (30) working days of grievance occurrence. (Grievance forms may be pickup from Supervisors or requested via email of appointed Grievance Officers) Forms may be hand delivered to the Officer, scanned, and emailed back, or mail via the U.S postal service at stated mailing address on the form.

6. The Employee Grievance Officer(s) shall consist of one and/or two members of the Commissioner's Court appointed by the Commissioner's Court to serve a two-year term at the discretion of the Commissioner's Court. The Officer(s) may serve consecutive terms back-to-back if the Commissioner's Court allows. If the grievance filed is against the appointed Grievance Officer, the Commissioner's Court shall appoint another member from the court to serve as "acting Grievance Officer" for the duration of that specific grievance.

7. The aggrieved employee will be advised in writing of the date and time of the meeting of the Employee Grievance Officer(s).

8. The Employee Grievance Officer(s) shall determine if the alleged grievance falls within the scope of grievances as stated in 10.02.

9. A copy of the grievance should be retained by the employee and a copy should be filed by the employee(s) with County's Treasurer's office. The grievance should contain all pertinent facts with specifics on dates, times, etc., alleged grievance occurred and all pertinent facts relating to the attempted resolution of grievance including any recommendations, suggestions, etc., from the employee's immediate supervisor.

10. The employee or their representative will be allowed to present pertinent facts to the Grievance Officer(s) or have witnesses to testify on their behalf. The Officer(s) then will be allowed to cross-examine the employee, supervisor, or witness.

11. If the employee fails to meet the filing time limits, the grievance will be considered null and void.

12. Grievance hearings are not judicial in nature, therefore, rules of court of law will not be followed.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**COMMISSIONER'S COURT GRIEVANCE SYSTEM (Cont.)**

13. The employee may represent themselves and/or have a designated representative or witnesses present.

14. Loud and/or abusive language by the employee, supervisor, witnesses, or representative will not be allowed and will be grounds for disciplinary action.

15. The Officer(s), after hearing arguments from all parties involved, shall actively investigate the claim, work with supervisor(s) and employee on mediations and remediation regarding the grievance if necessary, and advise the Commissioner's Court of the grievance, findings and result.

16. If the Grievance investigation reveals and/or uncovers possible reason for disciplinary actions, then the Officer(s) will present their findings to the Commissioner's Court for the Court to decide on the next course of action.

# HUTCHINSON COUNTY EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE FORM

GRIEVANT INFORMATION	
<b>EMPLOYEE NAME</b>	<b>DATE FORM SUBMITTED</b>
<b>JOB TITLE</b>	<b>DEPARTMENT</b>
<b>EMPLOYEE HOME MAILING ADDRESS</b>	<b>CELL PHONE NUMBER AND/OR EMAIL</b>

DETAILS OF EVENT LEADING TO GRIEVANCE	
<b>DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION OF EVENT</b>	<b>WITNESSES</b> if applicable
<b>ACCOUNT OF EVENT</b>	<b>VIOLATIONS</b>
Provide a detailed account of the occurrence. Include the names of any additional persons involved.	Provide a list of any policies, procedures, or guidelines you believe have been violated in the event described.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

Please retain a copy of this form for your own records. As the grievant, please provide your signature below, as it indicates that the information you've included on this form is truthful.

SIGNATURES	
<b>EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE</b>	<b>DATE</b>
<b>RECEIVED BY: PRINTED NAME AND SIGNATURE</b>	<b>DATE</b>

## HUTCHINSON COUNTY POLICY ON DISCIPLINE

### DISCIPLINE:

1. Each supervisor shall have the authority to administer discipline to employees in their department for poor performance, violation of policies, disruptive behavior, or any other behavior or activity which the supervisor feels is not acceptable as it relates to the employee's job or the best interest of the department or County.

### TYPES OF DISCIPLINE

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

### REASONS:

3. Examples of reasons for administering discipline shall include, **but not be limited to**, any violation of the rules, regulations, or policies contained in the Hutchinson County Employee Handbook or any other written County policies.

### AT WILL EMPLOYMENT:

4. 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.

5. The 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.

## HUTCHINSON COUNTY WHISTLEBLOWER

### **DEFINITIONS:**

1. An employee may, in good faith, report an alleged violation of a Hutchinson County Policy or federal or state law to their supervisor, department head, or Treasurer, unless all of these persons are the alleged perpetrators of the alleged violation of policy or law. If all of the listed persons are alleged to be involved in the violation, the employee may report the allegation to District Attorney. The county will investigate the reported activity.
2. 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.
3. An employee who intentionally makes a false report of wrongdoing may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.
4. 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 the District Attorney.
5. An employee with a question regarding this policy should contact the County Judge.

## **HUTCHINSON COUNTY WORKPLACE VIOLENCE**

### **DEFINITIONS:**

1. Hutchinson County is committed to providing a workplace free of violence. Hutchinson 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 in fear for their safety. Employees are required to report all suspicious conduct or comments to their immediate supervisor. 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 or the sheriff's department. If an employee wishes to carry a firearm at their place of work they must have permission from their Elected Official /Department Head who then submits request to the County Judge. If employees believe that a person is violating this policy, they should immediately report to their immediate supervisor or the sheriff's department. Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to discipline up to and including immediate termination.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**

**PURPOSE:**

1. The purpose of this policy shall be to establish a drug and alcohol-free workplace to help ensure a safe and productive work setting for all employees.

**APPLICABILITY:**

2. This policy shall apply to all employees of Hutchinson County regardless of rank or position and shall include temporary and part-time employees.

3. The only exception to this policy shall be the possession of controlled substances by law enforcement personnel as part of their law enforcement duties.

**POLICY:**

4. The following shall be a violation of this policy:

- a. The manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, sale, purchase, or use of a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia on County property.
- b. Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs while on County property or while on duty for the County.
- c. The unauthorized possession or use of prescription or over-the-counter drugs while on County property or while on duty for the County.
- d. The use of 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.
- e. Any positive test on drugs or alcohol will result in termination of employee.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY  
POLICY ON DRUGS AND ALCOHOL (CONT.)**

**DEFINITIONS:**

5. **A controlled substance** shall include any substance listed in Schedules I-V of Section 202 of the Controlled Substance Act (21 U.S.C. S 812), as amended. (A copy of this information is available for review in the Auditor's Office.)
6. **County property** shall include all County owned, rented, or leased real property such as buildings, land, parking lots etc. and property used by employees such as vehicles, lockers, desks, closets, storage areas, etc.
7. **Drugs** shall include any chemical substance that produces physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral change in the user.
8. **Drug paraphernalia** shall include equipment, a product, or material that is used or intended for use in concealing an illegal drug or for use in injecting, ingesting, inhaling, or otherwise inducing into the human body an illegal drug or controlled substance.
9. **Illegal drug** shall include any drug or derivative thereof which the use, possession, sale, transfer, attempted sale or transfer, manufacture, or storage of is illegal or regulated under any federal, state, or local law or regulation and any other drug, including (but not limited to) a prescription drug, used for any other than a legitimate medical reason, and inhalants used illegally. Included is marijuana or cannabis in all forms.
10. **Under the influence** shall be defined as a state of having a blood alcohol concentration of 0.08 as defined in the Texas Penal Code Sec. 49.01.



**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON DRUGS AND ALCOHOL (CONT.)**

**POLICY VIOLATIONS:**

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

**PRESCRIPTION DRUGS:**

12. Employees taking prescription medications shall be required to notify their supervisor of any possible effects the medication might have regarding their job performance and physical/mental capacity.

13. Any information concerning prescription medications being used by an employee, and any other medical information of which the supervisor becomes aware, shall be treated as confidential information.

14. Prescription medications used at work are to be kept in their original container.

**TREATMENT:**

15. Employees having problems with drugs or alcohol are encouraged to seek treatment from qualified professionals.

16. Information on benefits provided for treatment of alcohol and drug problems through the County's medical insurance program is available in the employee's insurance coverage booklet or from the County Treasurer's Office.

**RESERVATION OF RIGHTS:**

17. Although adherence to this policy is considered a condition of continued employment, nothing in this policy shall alter an employee's status and shall not be deemed a contract or promise of employment.

18. All employees required to have a CDL license will be subject to drug and alcohol testing, according to federal motor carrier safety regulations. All CDL license holders will adhere to all Texas and Federal regulations.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON DRUGS AND ALCOHOL (CONT.)**

**REASONABLE SUSPICION:**

19. If an employee is having work performance problems or displaying behavior that may be alcohol or drug related or is otherwise demonstration conduct that may be in violation of this drug and alcohol policy where immediate action is necessary, the elected official or supervisor will require that employee to submit to alcohol or drug test. The following conditions might be sign 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
- Borrowing money from co-workers or seeking an advance of pay or other unusual display of need for money.
- Constant fatigue or hyperactivity
- Smell of alcohol
- Difficulty walking or standing up
- Excessive, unexplained absences
- Dulled mental processes
- Slow reaction rate

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY  
POLICY ON DRUGS AND ALCOHOL (CONT.)**

**REASONABLE SUSPICION (CONT.)**

20. Elected Officials or supervisors must take action if they have reason to believe one or more of the previous lists (item #19) conditions is indicated and that the substance abuse is affecting their employee's job performance or behavior. The following steps will be taken:

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. Employees will be asked to release any evidence, such as alcohol or drug paraphernalia, related 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.
- d. The elected official or supervisor 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.
- e. The elected official or supervisor shall, within 24 hours of 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 Treasurer's office for filing.

## HUTCHINSON COUNTY POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

### DEFINITIONS & PURPOSE:

1. For purposes of this policy “social media” includes, but is not limited to, online forums, blogs and social networking sites, such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and all other social media platforms.
2. Hutchinson 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; is used to harass supervisors, co-workers, customers or vendors; creates a hostile work environment; or harms the goodwill and reputation of Hutchinson County among the community at large. Hutchinson 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.
3. 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 manager or supervisor.
  - a. If your posts on social media mention Hutchinson County make clear that you are an employee of Hutchinson County and that the views posted are yours alone and do not represent the views of Hutchinson County.
  - b. Do not mention Hutchinson County supervisors, employees, customers or vendors without their express consent.
  - c. Do not pick fights. If you see a misrepresentation about Hutchinson County, respond respectfully with factual information, not inflammatory comments.
  - d. 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.
  - e. Employees may not use Hutchinson County computer equipment for non-work-related activities without written permission. Social media activities should not interfere with your duties at work. Hutchinson County monitors its computers to ensure compliance with this restriction.
  - f. You must comply with copyright laws and cite or reference sources accurately.
  - g. Do not link to Hutchinson County’s website or post Hutchinson County material on a social media site without written permission from your supervisor.
  - h. All Hutchinson 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.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA (Cont.)**

- i. Any confidential information that you obtained through your position at Hutchinson County must be kept confidential and should not be discussed through in social media forum.
- j. Violation of this policy may lead to discipline up to and including the immediate termination of employment.

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

## HUTCHINSON COUNTY POLICY ON SEPARATIONS

### **DEFINITION:**

1. A separation shall be defined as any situation in which the employer-employee relationship between the County and a County employee ends.

### **TYPES OF SEPARATION:**

2. All separations from Hutchinson County shall be designated as one of the following types:

- a. Resignation
- b. Retirement
- c. Dismissal
- d. Reduction in force (layoff)
- e. Death
- f. Other

### **RESIGNATION:**

3. A resignation shall be classified as any situation in which an employee voluntarily leaves their employment with Hutchinson County and the separation does not fall into one of the other categories.

4. Employees who are resigning should submit a written notice of resignation to their supervisor.

### **RETIREMENT:**

5. 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.

6. An employee who is retiring should notify their supervisor of that intent at least 30 days prior to the actual retirement date.

### **DISMISSAL:**

7. A dismissal shall be any involuntary separation of employment that does not fall into one of the other categories of separation.

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**POLICY ON SEPARATIONS (CONT.)**

8. Hutchinson County is an “at will” employer and a supervisor may dismiss an employee at any time for any legal reason or no reason, with or without notice.

**REDUCTION IN FORCE:**

9. 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.

**DEATH:**

10. A separation by death shall occur when an individual dies while currently employed by the County.

11. If an employee dies while still employed by the County, their designated beneficiary or estate shall receive all earned pay and payable benefits.

**OTHER:**

12. Any separation that does not fall into one of the categories outlined previously in this policy shall be designated as an “other” separation.

13. When a separation is designated as “other”, the supervisor shall provide details of the nature of the separation for the personnel records.

**NOTIFICATION:**

14. As soon as a supervisor becomes aware of separation from employment, or the intent to separate employment, by an employee, the supervisor shall be responsible for immediately notifying the County Treasurer.

## **HUTCHINSON COUNTY POLICY ON TRAVEL**

### **DEFINITIONS:**

1. This policy covers all employees and officials who are required to travel outside of Hutchinson County as agents or representatives of Hutchinson County.
2. Advance payments or reimbursements of expenses for travel will be made only if for definite county business and must be approved by the proper elected official or department head; properly documented with Travel Expense Voucher and required receipts; and approved by the Commissioner's Court.
3. Employee or official planning travel and desiring advance payment of air fare, registration fees, or lodging must present any necessary documentation to County Auditor as far in advance as possible to allow advance approval by Commissioner's Court. NOTE: If employee or official does not travel as planned after advance payment is made, employee or official may be responsible for funds paid in advance by county. Exception to the above statement shall be addressed by Commissioners Court.
4. Proof of travel and/or attendance will be requested. Receipts must accompany all requests for payment or reimbursement. Lodging and full meal allowance will not be paid unless agent is required to travel more than 100 miles out of county or special circumstances require unless approved by the Commissioner's Court. Mileage of personal automobile should be documented by odometer readings. Mileage to destination will be paid based on Official State Mileage Guide, with an additional 40 miles per day for trips requiring an overnight stay or 20 miles additional allowance for one-day trips. Carpooling is encouraged when possible.
5. Any excess spending during traveling by any employee or official will be paid only by approval of Commissioner's Court.



**HUTCHINSON COUNTY**  
**FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT - SAFE HARBOR**

1. Hutchinson County makes every effort to pay its employees correctly. Occasionally, however, inadvertent mistakes can happen. When mistakes do happen and are called to the Treasurer's attention, Hutchinson 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.
2. 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 timecard 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 paycheck, please verify immediately that you were paid correctly for all regular hours worked each work week.
3. Non-exempt employees, unless authorized by your supervisor, should not work any hours that are not authorized. Do not start work early, finish work late, work during a meal break, or perform any other extra or overtime work unless you are authorized to do so. That time worked is to be recorded on your 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 the Treasurer.
4. It is a violation of Hutchinson 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 the Treasurer's Office, (806)878-4010.
5. 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.
6. If you have questions about deductions from your pay, please immediately contact your supervisor. 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 Treasurer's office, (806)878-4010. 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 the County Attorney (806)878-4044. Every report will be fully investigated and corrective

**HUTCHINSON COUNTY  
FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT-SAFE HARBOR (Cont.)**

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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Signed

## PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have received a copy of the Hutchinson County Personnel Policy Manual 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 manual and understand that it contains general personnel policies of the County. If I need clarification on any of the information in this manual, I will contact my immediate supervisor.

I further understand that the Hutchinson County Personnel Policy Manual is not a contract of employment. I understand that I am an at-will employee and that my employment may be terminated by either myself or the County, 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 Hutchinson County's policies, practices, and benefits. I understand that Hutchinson 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 further understand that as a Hutchinson 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.

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

I have read these policies and understand these policies and I agree to I abide by and adhere to these policies.

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Printed Name of Employee

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Signature of Employee

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Date Signed

**REVISION & REVIEW INFORMATION:**

The current revision and review of this policy was conducted by a subcommittee of Hutchinson County. The committee members were.

- Kathy Sargent (Treasurer)
- Amy Back (Assistant Treasurer/Incoming Treasurer)
- Cindy Irwin (County Judge)
- Carrie Kimmell (County Tax Assessor)
- Tammy McBayer (Incoming District Clerk)
- Lesha Krieg (Auditor)
- Monica Sepulveda (Jail Captain)
- Dwight Kirksey (Commissioner)

Committee met a total of 6 times from April to November of 2022. Estimated 15 Hours

On 4/24/2023 Commissioner's Court approved the revised Policy change on pg. 26 # 6.