

---

---

# **PERSONNEL POLICIES**

*of*

**POLK COUNTY, TEXAS**

**Revised September 8, 2020**

---

---

## *Notice to Employees*

Polk County operates under the legal doctrine of **employment-at-will** and, within requirements of state and federal law regarding employment, can dismiss an employee at any time, without or without notice, for any reason or no reason. These personnel policies do not constitute or imply a contract, agreement, promise, or guarantee of employment or of continued employment. The county has the right to change these policies at any time, with or without notice to employees.

Each reference in these policies to the county means Polk County, Texas.

***A MESSAGE TO COUNTY EMPLOYEES  
FROM THE COMMISSIONERS COURT***

We are glad to have you on the team of public servants that make up county government. From elected officials to temporary employees, our job is to serve our fellow neighbors. As a county employee, you have a responsibility to the citizens of Polk County. How well you do with citizens often will be the only basis on which our county government is judged. Therefore, our objective is to provide the best possible service to the citizens in an efficient, fair, and courteous manner.

This manual, and the personnel policies contained within it, are intended to provide guidance on how we work as a team to provide that public service. Whether you are a new or experienced employee, this manual will give you facts about the county, how it works, and the policies which govern us as employees.

The personnel policies and procedures of the county are adopted by the Commissioner's court, are subject to regular review, and may be updated or changed from time to time. The county operates as an At-Will employer. These policies do not constitute or imply an employment contract and may be changed at any time with or without notice to employees.

Other county elected officials and department heads may have additional policies governing their employees. Be sure to check with your supervisor or department head to see which additional policies, if any, are applicable to you. If you need more details on the county-wide policies and procedures, please consult the Human Resources Department.

Sincerely,

*County Judge and  
Commissioners Court*

**TEN COMMANDMENTS  
FOR  
CITIZEN RELATIONS IN POLK COUNTY**

1. Our clients and the citizens of Polk County are never an interruption to our work; they are our real reason for being in business.
2. Greet everyone with a friendly smile. People like friendly contact and will usually return it.
3. Call our visitors and citizens by name; make a game of learning regular callers' names.
4. Remember: You are "Polk County"; in the customer's eyes, you are the "county government" regardless of your title.
5. Never argue with citizens or other callers. Be a good listener, agree with them where you can, and then do what you can to make them happy.
6. Never say, "I don't know." If you don't know the answer, say, "Let me find out for you."
7. Remember that the people of Polk County pay your wages. Treat them like the boss. They sign your pay check.
8. State things in a positive way. Choosing positive words will help you become an effective communicator.
9. Brighten everyone's day! Make it a point to do something that brings a little sunshine into everyone's life.
10. Go the extra mile! You will be richly rewarded for doing just a little more than the citizens of Polk County expect.

## ***TABLE OF CONTENTS***

1.00	GENERAL POLICIES .....	1
1.01	Authority .....	1
1.02	Severability.....	1
1.03	Responsibility for Implementation of Personnel Policies .....	1
1.04	Purpose .....	1
1.05	Applicability of Personnel Policies .....	2
1.06	Dissemination of Personnel Policies .....	2
1.07	Equal Employment Opportunity .....	2
1.08	Affirmative Action .....	2
1.09a	Harassment .....	3
1.09b	Sexual Harassment .....	4
1.10	Persons with Disabilities .....	5
1.11	GINA (Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act).....	5
1.12	Changes to these Policies and Employee Suggestions.....	6
2.00	EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES .....	7
2.01	General .....	7
2.02	Professional Appearance .....	7
2.03	Timeliness and Attendance .....	7
2.04	Outside Activities .....	7
2.05	Gifts and Gratuities .....	8
2.06	Conflict of Interest .....	8
2.07	Political Activity .....	8
2.08	Communications.....	9
2.09	Telephone Use.....	10
2.10	Uniforms.....	10
2.11	Purchasing .....	10
2.12	Indebtedness to the County .....	10
2.13	Cell Phone Policy.....	11
2.14	Social Media.....	11
3.00	HIRING PRACTICES .....	13
3.01	Methods of Recruitment and Selection .....	13
3.02	Position Announcements.....	13
3.03	Qualifications .....	13
3.04	Selection .....	14
3.05	Age Requirements .....	14
3.06	Application for Employment.....	14
3.07	Employment of Relatives (Nepotism).....	15
3.08	Testing.....	16
3.09	Physical Standards.....	16
3.10	Verification of Eligibility to Work.....	16

3.11	Driving Record.....	17
3.12	Disqualification.....	17
3.13	Prior Service With the County.....	17
3.14	Placement on County Payroll.....	17
3.15	Emergency Employees.....	18
3.16	Orientation and Training.....	18
4.00	TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT.....	19
4.01	Categories.....	19
4.02	Introductory Period.....	20
4.03	Assigned Staff.....	20
5.00	EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION AND ADVANCEMENT.....	21
5.01	Pay.....	21
5.02	Paydays.....	21
5.03	Check Delivery.....	21
5.04	Payroll Deductions.....	21
5.05	Merit Increases.....	22
5.06	Across-the-Board Pay Increases.....	23
5.07	Classification Plan.....	23
5.08	Pay Plan.....	23
5.09	Pay Group and Steps.....	23
5.10	Classification and Pay Administration.....	23
5.11	Promotions.....	24
5.12	Lateral Transfers.....	24
5.13	Demotions.....	24
5.14	Pay Reduction for Disciplinary Reasons.....	24
5.15	Approving Authority.....	24
5.16	Longevity Pay.....	25
5.17	Certificate Pay.....	25
5.18	Cell Phone Allowance.....	26
5.19	Spanish Bi-Lingual Incentive Program.....	27
6.00	WORK SCHEDULE AND TIME REPORTING.....	28
6.01	Workweek and Work Hours.....	28
6.02	Number of Hours Worked.....	29
6.03	Overtime Worked.....	29
6.04	Exemptions From F.L.S.A. (Overtime Compensation).....	29
6.05	Special Circumstances.....	30
6.06	Overtime Compensation.....	30
6.07	Compensatory Time.....	31
6.08	Equivalent Time.....	31
6.09	Holidays Worked.....	32
6.10	Leave or Holidays Taken and Overtime.....	32
6.11	Time Reporting.....	32
6.12	Emergency Closings.....	33
6.13	On-Call.....	35

7.00	BENEFITS.....	36
7.01	Medical and Life Insurance.....	36
7.015	Retiree Health Benefit.....	36
7.02	Social Security.....	38
7.03	Pension Plan.....	38
7.04	Workers' Compensation.....	38
7.05	Unemployment Insurance.....	38
7.06	Leave Time.....	38
8.00	LEAVE TIME.....	39
8.01	Definitions.....	39
8.02	Approval of Leave.....	39
8.03	Vacation Leave.....	39
8.04	Compensatory Leave.....	41
8.05	Sick Leave.....	41
8.06	Sick Leave Pool.....	42
8.07	Personal Leave.....	47
8.08	Military Leave.....	48
8.09	Civil Leave.....	49
8.10	Family and Medical Leave.....	50
8.11	Other Leaves of Absence Without Pay.....	56
8.12	Emergency Leave.....	57
8.13	Injury Leave.....	58
8.14	Using Leave in Combination.....	58
8.15	Abandonment of Position.....	58
9.00	HOLIDAYS.....	60
9.01	General Policy.....	60
9.02	Work During Holidays.....	61
9.03	Holidays Falling on Non-Workdays.....	61
9.04	Holiday During Vacation.....	61
9.05	Holiday Compensation for Section 7(k) Employees.....	61
10.00	HEALTH AND SAFETY.....	63
10.01	Safety Policy.....	63
10.02	Employee Responsibilities and Reports.....	63
10.03	Employee Suggestions.....	63
10.04	On-the-Job Injuries.....	63
10.05	Drug-Free Workplace.....	66
11.00	USE OF COUNTY PROPERTY.....	69
11.01	General Policy.....	69
11.02	Use of Tools, Equipment, Property, and Vehicles.....	69
11.03	Valid Driver's License.....	69
11.04	Vehicle Insurance.....	69
11.05	Accident Reporting.....	70

11.06	Take-Home (or assigned) Vehicle Policy .....	70
11.07	Computer, Electronic Mail, and Internet Use.....	72
11.08	County Issued Cell Phones.....	74
11.08a	County Issued Cellular Telephone Agreement.....	75
12.00	DISCIPLINE.....	76
12.01	General .....	76
12.02	Progressive Discipline.....	77
13.00	SEPARATIONS .....	80
13.01	Types of Separations .....	80
13.02	Resignation.....	80
13.03	Retirement .....	80
13.04	Reduction In Force .....	81
13.05	Dismissal .....	81
13.06	Disability .....	81
13.07	Death .....	82
13.08	Calculation of Separation Pay.....	82
13.09	Exit Interviews and Records .....	82
13.10	Continuation of Group Insurance .....	83
14.00	GRIEVANCES .....	85
14.01	Policy.....	85
14.02	Final Authority .....	85
14.03	Procedure.....	85
15.00	JOB (CLASS) DESCRIPTIONS AND PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS .....	88
15.01	Job Descriptions .....	88
15.02	Distribution.....	88
15.03	Requests for Clarification.....	88
15.04	Employee Performance Evaluations .....	88
16.00	PERSONNEL FILES.....	89
16.01	General .....	89
16.02	Personnel Action Form.....	89
16.03	Contents of Personnel Files.....	90
16.04	Leave Records .....	91
17.00	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT .....	93
17.01	General Policy .....	93
17.02	Tuition Reimbursement.....	93
17.03	Required Attendance at Seminars and Conferences .....	93
17.04	Professional Memberships and Seminars.....	93



18.00	TRAVEL /EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT.....	95
18.01	General Travel/Expense Reimbursement Policy.....	95
18.02	Travel Within the General Work Area.....	95
18.03	Travel Outside the General Work Area.....	95
18.04	Allowance for Meals and Incidental Expenses.....	96
18.05	Lodging Expenses.....	96
18.06	Other Expenses.....	96
18.07	Personal Vehicle.....	97
18.08	Expense Report.....	97
18.09	Exceptions.....	97
18.10	Prohibited Expenditures.....	98
19.00	MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES.....	99
19.01	Smoking.....	99
19.02	Chain of Command.....	99
19.03	Service Award Program.....	99
20.00	ANTI-FRAUD POLICY.....	100
20.01	Scope of the Policy.....	100
20.02	Purpose.....	100
20.03	Definition of and Actions constituting Fraud.....	100
20.04	Responsibilities.....	100
20.05	Additional Responsibilities of Supervisors.....	101
20.06	Responsibility and Authority for Follow Up and Investigation.....	101
20.07	Reported Incident Follow Up Procedure.....	101
20.08	Disciplinary Action.....	102
20.09	Other Inappropriate Conduct.....	102
	HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAM.....	INSERT
HS 10.01	Goals.....	HS - 1
HS 10.02	Responsibilities.....	HS - 2
HS 10.03	Organization.....	HS - 5
HS 10.04	Training.....	HS - 8
HS 10.05	Safety Meetings.....	HS - 9
HS 10.06	Medical Services.....	HS - 10
HS 10.07	Physical conditions.....	HS - 12
HS 10.08	On-the-Job Injuries.....	HS - 14
HS 10.09	County Vehicle Accidents & Third Party Claims.....	HS - 18
HS 10.10	Operating County Vehicles.....	HS - 22
HS 10.11	Accident Investigation.....	HS - 25
HS 10.12	Hazard Reporting.....	HS - 27
HS 10.13	Safety Inspections.....	HS - 28
HS 10.14	Purchasing Safety Equipment.....	HS - 29

HS 10.15 Personal Protective Equipment.....	HS - 29
HS 10.16 Hazardous Chemical Training .....	HS - 32
HS 10.17 Traffic Control.....	HS – 33
HS 10.18 Departmental Safety Manuals .....	HS - 33
HS 10.19 Disciplinary Action.....	HS - 34

Safety Program Forms .....	Attachment A-D
Appendix A Hazard Communication Policy .....	HS - 39
Appendix B HIV/AIDS Policy .....	HS - 48
Appendix C Alcohol and Drug Testing Policy.....	HS – 53
Appendix D Seat Belt Use Policy	
Appendix E Accident Prevention Plan	