

SOMERVELL COUNTY PERSONNEL POLICIES



June 2018

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PREFACE

The purpose of this personnel policy handbook is to provide you with consistent information on County operations and what is expected in the performance of your job duties.

WELCOME TO SOMERVELL COUNTY

As an employee of Somervell County, you are an important part of our organization. Our job is to deliver quality government services to the citizens of our County. We are proud of the work we do and the progress we have made. We are happy that you have chosen to be a part of County service.

The successful operation of the County's business depends on the spirit of its workers, and in many respects, Somervell County will be judged by your actions and the work related attitudes that you project. It is vitally important that you conduct yourself in a professional and ethical manner at all times. Together we operate as a service team with the common goal of assuring the best possible government services for our citizens.

We hope you have a positive career experience at Somervell County.

SECTION 1.00
STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES

The County abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act (ADAAA). The intent is to coordinate the basic and essential work needs of the County with individuals who may interface with or work for the County, and have some disability as outlined in regulations.

It is your responsibility to notify your supervisor or the Treasurer's Office of any disabling condition that exists or develops and that requires accommodation. Once notified, the County will consider reasonable accommodations based upon both your needs and the County's.

It is the policy of Somervell County to provide equal opportunity for all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, creed, color, sex, age, national origin, marital status, or physical disability.

This policy is consistent with the requirements and objectives set forth under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Fair Labor Standards Act as amended.

BASIC LEAVE ENTITLEMENT

FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees for the following reasons:

- For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child birth;
- To care for your child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;
- To care for your spouse, son or daughter, or parent, who has a serious health condition; or
- For a serious health condition that makes you unable to perform your job.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

You are eligible if you have worked for the County for at least one year and for 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months. The County measures the 12 month period backward from the date you use any leave under this policy.

MILITARY FAMILY LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS

Eligible employees with a spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or call to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

BENEFITS AND PROTECTIONS

During FMLA leave, the County must maintain your health coverage under any group health plan on the same terms as if you had continued to work. Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms.

Use of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued before the start of your leave.

INSURANCE

While you are on unpaid leave, you are required to pay for premiums due to the County no later than 30 days after the due date the County sets, or your coverage will be discontinued. If you do not return to work after using the maximum leave, you may be required to reimburse the County for all medical premiums paid by the County while you were on unpaid leave.

SUSPENSION OF BENEFITS

While on unpaid FMLA leave, you will not be eligible for holidays, or earn vacation, sick leave or other benefits afforded to employees actively at work, except for those stated in this policy.

DEFINITION OF SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITION

A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents you from performing the functions of your job, or prevents your qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities. Serious health conditions include periods of absence for on-the-job injuries.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than three consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

USE OF LEAVE

You do not need to use this leave entitlement in one block. Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. You must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the employer's operations. Leave due to qualifying exigencies may also be taken on an intermittent basis.

SUBSTITUTION OF PAID LEAVE FOR UNPAID LEAVE

The County requires use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA leave, unless FMLA and Workers' Compensation run concurrently. In order to use paid leave for FMLA leave, employees must comply with the employer's normal paid leave policies.

PAID AND UPAID LEAVE

If you have accrued leave, you are required to use all sick leave first and then all vacation time with the remainder of the 12 weeks as unpaid leave.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

You must provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days notice is not possible, you must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally comply with the County's normal call-in procedures. If you do not provide 30 days notice for foreseeable leave, the leave request may be denied until at least 30 days from the date the County receives notice.

You must provide sufficient information for the County to determine if the leave qualifies for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include your inability to perform job functions, a family member's inability to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. You must also inform the County if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified. You may also be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

All documents relating to Family Medical Leave will be generated from, and submitted to, the Treasurer's office.

PHYSICIAN CERTIFICATION

The County reserves the right to require certification of the serious health condition of you or your eligible dependent when you request or use leave.

EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

The County must inform employees requesting leave whether they are eligible under FMLA. If they are, the notice must specify any additional information required as well as the employees' rights and responsibilities. If they are not eligible, the employer must provide a reason for the ineligibility.

The County must inform you if leave will be designated as FMLA protected and the amount of leave counted against the County's leave entitlement. If the County determines that the leave is not FMLA protected, the County must notify you.

EMPLOYER RIGHTS

It is the County's policy that if your leave qualifies for FMLA coverage and you have not requested coverage, the County will designate the leave as FMLA protected and will inform you of this in writing.

UNLAWFUL ACTS BY EMPLOYERS

FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer to:

- Interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided under FMLA;
- Discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to FMLA.

ENFORCEMENT

You may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer.

FMLA does not affect any Federal or State law prohibiting discrimination, nor supersede any State or local law or collective bargaining agreement that provides greater family or medical leave rights.

The County provides Workers' Compensation Insurance to cover your medical costs if you are injured on the job. The program may also replace part of your pay if you are unable to work because of an on-the-job injury.

You must report all on-the-job injuries to your supervisor immediately, so that a First Report of Injury (DWC Form 1) can be filed with the County's insurance carrier.

If you are unable to work because of an on-the-job injury, the County may arrange for continued pay based on current state laws. Any pay replacement benefits would begin on the eighth day of absence. The Worker's Compensation insurance carrier will usually pay you directly.

While you are off work, the County and insurance carrier will work with you and your treating physician to develop a return to work plan. This may include modified hours, modified duty and alternative scheduling, until your doctor gives you a complete return to work release. The County and insurance carrier will also monitor your compliance with the return to work plan.

Workers' Compensation forms are obtained from the delivered to the Treasurer's office.

If the Workers' Compensation Work Status Report indicates that the employee may be returned to work under modified duties or schedule, the Treasurer's office will work with department heads for placement.

If placement is possible, the Treasurer's office will send a Bona Fide Job Offer to the employee. The employee's response to the Bona fide Job Offer will be delivered to the Treasurer's office.

The County will designate your time off from work as FMLA leave (see Section 1.03) if you are eligible.

If you are not eligible for FMLA leave, you may ask to be paid from your accrued sick time, or from vacation leave if no sick leave is available, if the injury does not qualify for temporary income benefits.

All employees of Somervell County are expected and required to treat all people with whom they work with respect and courtesy. Harassment, including sexual harassment, is contrary to basic standards of conduct between individuals and is prohibited by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Texas Commission on Human Rights Act (TCHRA), and this policy.

Somervell County endeavors to provide a working environment free from harassment. It is the County's policy that verbal or physical conduct by any employee that disrupts or interferes with another's work performance or that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment will not be tolerated. Any form of harassment of an employee by any other employee, or by or of a non-employee is prohibited.

Harassment is verbal, physical or visual conduct that interferes with your ability to perform your job. Harassment includes jokes, slurs, or other disparaging remarks based on gender, race, color, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, or disability.

Sexual Harassment includes:

- Sexual flirtations, touching, advances, or propositions;
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
- Graphic or suggestive comments about an individual's dress or body;
- Sexually degrading words to describe an individual;
- The display of sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or photographs.

If you believe you are being harassed or discriminated against, you have a responsibility to report or complain as soon as possible to the appropriate supervisor, department head, or to the Personnel Director.

All complaints of harassment will be investigated promptly and impartially, with confidentiality maintained to the greatest extent possible. In all cases, you will be advised of the findings following the investigation. Any employee, supervisor, or director who is found to have engaged in harassment of another employee will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

SECTION 2.00
ETHICS

2.01 CONFIDENTIALITY	October 9, 2012
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As a County employee, you may come into contact with, or have access to, confidential information. You are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of this information. If you have any questions regarding confidentiality, you should discuss them with your immediate supervisor or department head.

2.02 DISCLOSURE AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST	October 9, 2012
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If you believe that there may be a conflict of interest between a personal endeavor and County business, you must bring this to the attention of your immediate supervisor at your earliest opportunity.

As a County employee, you are not allowed to perform or to be involved in political services, campaigning, or related activities during working hours. You may not use County equipment, vehicles, uniforms, insignia or other property in any way for political activities.

You are not required to contribute to any political fund or collection process, or to render any political service to any person or party.

2.04 REPRESENTATION OF THE COUNTY	October 9, 2012
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You may not represent the County in an official capacity before any entity without prior authorization from the Commissioners' Court.

Information requests that are not part of your regular duty assignments should be directed to your supervisor or department head.

2.05 TIPS AND GIFTS	October 9, 2012
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You may not accept tips for work being compensated by the County.

You should not accept a gift from contractors, vendors, or other persons that may induce you to show or appear to show favoritism. This does not apply to gifts of nominal value as provided in Section 36.10 Tex. Pen. Code Ann.

You may not:

- Download non-work related software, data or images;
- Distribute non-work related e-mails;
- Upload, copy or transfer data owned by or software licensed to the County without explicit authorization;
- Use County resources to intentionally disable or overload any computer system or network;
- Access, store, display, distribute or record sexually explicit or extremist material;
- Access the internet for non-work related activities;
- Use another person's user ID or password or allow another person to use yours.

Occasional and incidental personal use of County technology and resources is permitted, unless:

- It interferes materially with the use of County technology resources;
- It burdens the County with additional costs;
- It interferes with your employment duties;
- It is prohibited under County policy.

The County has installed software and/or hardware to monitor and record all computer use. The County retains the right to record or inspect any and all files stored on its systems.

You should have no expectation of privacy with respect to County computer use. Serious disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, may result from evidence of prohibited activity obtained through monitoring or inspection of electronic messages, files, or electronic storage devices. Illegal activity involving County technology resource usage may be referred to appropriate authorities for prosecution.

Personal telephone use must be kept to a minimum; this includes County and personal cell phones. You may not charge personal long distance calls to the County. Individual departments may have more restrictive rules concerning phone use.

SECTION 3.00
CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION

The Section Below Does Not
Apply To Enterprise Fund Departments

The Somervell County Compensation Plan is a Commissioners' Court approved system of salary grades and steps within each grade. The pay grade is generally defined by the level of the responsibilities performed within the job description of the position and the authority exercised by the position. The steps within each grade are representative of the length of time the employee has performed the job for the county.

The primary purpose of the Compensation Plan is to establish a comprehensive system ensuring fairness and similar pay structures across different positions within a variety of work units and job functions. To that end, the county has based the Compensation Plan on a salary survey of similar positions in applicable surrounding counties.

In order to ensure pay equity, the Somervell County Commissioners' Court will assess all current and future position pay grades or salaries on the most current salary survey implemented and the pay philosophy adopted for that survey. Salary surveys will be performed by the Human Resource Department. Salary surveys will be performed every two years, or earlier if requested by the court.

As a public employer, the County may choose to provide compensatory time off in lieu of cash overtime compensation. Additionally, the County may elect to provide compensatory time for all employees or for only some employees. Employees designated to receive compensatory time will be requested to sign an agreement prior to the transition from cash overtime compensation.

Regular employees may not exceed compensatory time accruals in excess of 240 hours. Compensatory time will be awarded at time-and-a-half for each hour worked in excess of 40 hours in a work week. Law enforcement officers, corrections officers, and certified firefighters engaged in fire suppression may not exceed compensatory time accruals in excess of 480 hours. Law enforcement and corrections officers will be awarded at time-and-a-half for each hour worked in excess of 171 hours in a 28-day work cycle. Firefighters will be awarded at time-and-a-half for each hour worked in excess of 212 hours in a 28-day work cycle.

The use of compensatory time must be pre-approved by the department head. Compensatory time must be used before vacation time. It is the responsibility of the department head to ensure that all leave time is deducted from accumulated compensatory time first, if available.

It is the responsibility of each department head to manage compensatory time accruals and ensure that accrual maximums are not exceeded; therefore, each department head may designate times or days that compensatory time must be used. The County strongly suggests that department heads begin designating employee time off when 50% of accrual maximums have been reached.

Compensatory time accruals will be provided to each member of the Commissioner's Court each quarter. Accrued compensatory time will be paid in full on the last pay period of the County's fiscal year.

Full Time – Regularly scheduled to work 40 hours or more per week on an annual basis, with the exception of those that fall under 207(k) or 213(b)(20) plan. Full time employees receive benefits.

Part Time – Regularly scheduled to work less than 30 hours per week on an annual basis. Part time employees are required to participate in the TCDRS retirement system, but receive no other benefits.

Seasonal – Regularly scheduled to work for a portion of a year, not to exceed 120 calendar days. Seasonal employees receive no benefits.

Temporary – Work on an irregular, as needed basis, and receive no benefits.

Exempt employees are not required by federal or state law to submit timesheets for pay purposes; however, the County requires exempt employees to record sick and vacation time used in increments of one hour or more in the Time Clock Plus reporting system so that absences can be charged against the employee's appropriate accrued leave. For exempt staff who do not have administrative rights to the Time Clock Plus reporting system, use of sick or vacation time must be reported to your department head according to applicable reporting policies.

An exempt employee may have his or her pay reduced or may be placed on unpaid leave for absences due to illness or injury of less than one full day when leave is not used because:

- Permission to use leave has not been sought or permission has been sought and denied;
- The employee's accrued leave has been exhausted; or
- The employee chooses to use leave without pay.

Exempt employees who have exhausted accrued leave or are using leave granted from the sick leave pool must turn in a timesheet of daily hours worked, for each pay period, to the Treasurer's office. Pay will be based on hours worked as reported on the timesheet. Denial of use of leave or authorization to use leave without pay must be reported to the Treasurer's office by the department head.

In the event of a disciplinary suspension or infractions of safety rules of major significance, appropriate deductions of one or more days will be subtracted from the employee's salary regardless of the availability of accrued leave.

After ten years of continuous full time service, employees will receive longevity pay increases of five dollars per month each year. Longevity pay and subsequent increases will be effective on the first pay period following the employee's anniversary date.

Longevity pay will be capped at fifteen hundred dollars in annual compensation. Employees who are currently receiving longevity pay in excess of the fifteen hundred dollar cap will no longer receive longevity pay increases after July 13, 2015.

Non-exempt employees must clock in and clock out according to their assigned work schedule and will be paid according to the time records for the applicable pay periods. Clock in and out times will be rounded to the nearest quarter hour. It is prohibited to abuse or take advantage of the time clock rounding, e.g. clocking in at 8:07 a.m. knowing the clock will round back to 8:00 a.m. or clocking out at 4:53 p.m. knowing the clock will round forward to 5:00 p.m. Employees clocking in 8 minutes or more after their assigned work time or clocking out 8 minutes or more before the end of their assigned work time will not have their accrued leave charged to make up their 40 hours. Tardiness, regardless of clock rounding, will be subject to disciplinary action.

All non-exempt employees will receive overtime pay in accordance with Fair Labor Standards Act.

Overtime must be approved in advance by your department head. Working overtime without prior approval may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

The compensation plan is designed to provide equitable salary administration during the course of employment.

The amount of salary earned during a pay period is computed by dividing the monthly rate of pay from the compensation table into two equal amounts

The Section Below Does Not
Apply To Enterprise Fund Departments

Vacated positions will automatically revert to the “A” step of the designated grade for the position. Department heads may fill these vacated position at the “A” step without prior approval from Commissioners’ Court. Department heads must seek approval from Commissioners’ Court in order to:

- Fill a soon to be vacated positions prior to the position being vacated,
- Fill a position higher than the “A” step,
- Add an additional position not listed in the budget salary sheet, or
- Change a position from part-time, seasonal or temporary to full-time.

As a disciplinary move, a department head may suspend or delay the advancement of an employee within their grade, or order a reduction in compensation to the next lowest step (but not lower than the A step). This action does not remove the department head’s power to move the employee forward to the original level as provided before any such suspension or reduction, with the understanding that no retroactive pay changes shall occur.

Following a disciplinary suspension, delay, or reduction in advancement within a grade pay range, the department head may at their discretion substantiate a continuation in pay movement as provided at any time within the management plan, and the effected employee’s applicable review date will be advanced or adjusted forward to reflect the new approved continuation date chosen by the department head within the disciplinary management plan for that employee.

Each employee shall have an assigned review date represented by their hire date or more recently, the date upon which they received a promotion to a higher grade or step.

The Section Below Does Not
Apply To Enterprise Fund Departments

A “Z” step means a rate of pay in excess of the top tabled value for a grade as prescribed for a job class, and such salary shall remain unchanged until the employee is either promoted to a higher grade with pay associated back in a table value or until overall table adjustments may raise the grade value to the level where the former “Z” rate is again within the Table of Compensation.

A demotion to a lower graded title/class or salary range shall have an appropriately reduced rate of pay which will not exceed the top step or salary range for the new grade/class.

Interdepartmental transfers will require an authorization signature from the department head filling the position, and an acknowledgement signature from the department head losing the employee. Interdepartmental transfers require a waiting period of 30 days after the transfer paperwork has been signed and dated by all parties, and will take place on the first day of the first pay period following the waiting period; however, the department head incurring the vacancy may waive the 30 day waiting period. All interdepartmental transfers will incur a new payroll review date as stated in the Payroll Review Date policy.

Performance evaluations shall be completed on an annual basis for all employees below the maximum step for their grade and must accompany an approved Personnel Action Form for movement across the range as scheduled to occur for an employee.

In accordance with the Texas Constitution, Article III, Section 53, pay raises will take effect after the authorization has been received by the Human Resource Department. Scheduled pay raises will take effect on the first day of the following pay period and must be submitted to the Human Resource Department no later than the day prior to the pay period of the effective increase. As a courtesy, notifications of allowable annual increase availability are generally sent to department heads by the Treasurer’s office; however, it is the department heads responsibility to track their employees’ eligibility for a pay raise.

Pay increases or decreases involving changes in position title and grade may take effect in the middle of a pay period; however, department heads are encouraged to make changes on the first day of a pay period. Pay change authorizations must be documented on the Personnel Action Form and signed by the department head or designee.

It is the policy of the county that hiring and other compensation considerations be accomplished in a manner that avoids any unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, age, religious preference, physical disability, or any other non-merit factor, or that causes any violation of civil rights to applicants, employees, or the general public.

It is the policy of the county to expect all department heads to cooperate fully with the intent and purposes of the spirit and meaning of these rules, and to work within the system for an equitable solution to all personnel related issues which result in the most effective and efficient government services available.

Employee promotions, demotions, transfers, suspensions, merit increases, delayed merit increases, and general employee information changes (phone number, address, etc.) will be documented on the Personnel Action Form.

Personnel Action forms will be emailed to the Human Resource office. The H.R. Director will sign, print a copy to be placed in the personnel file, and forward the document to the Treasurer's office.

No employee will receive an increase or decrease in salary without a Personnel Action Form signed by the Human Resource Director or designee. The only exception to this policy will be COLA increases authorized by the Commissioners' Court, District Judge authorizations for the County Auditor and employees, and longevity pay.

3.08 PAYDAYS	October 9, 2012
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You will be paid on the 15th and last day of the month. If the 15th or last day falls on a weekend or holiday, you will be paid the preceding day. It is your responsibility to verify the accuracy of your paycheck, and if an error has been made, you must notify your supervisor or the Treasurer. It is your responsibility to make sure desired elections for benefits and tax withholding are properly reflected on your check.

The following authorized deductions are to be deducted from your check:

- Withholding Tax-The County deducts from each paycheck the amount established by the Internal Revenue Service for the number of exemptions you declare. Shortly after the first of each year, the County will send you a statement of total earnings and the amount deducted as withholding tax.
- Social Security-County employees are included in the Federal Social Security Program. The required percentage of the employee's income is deducted for Social Security.
- Hospitalization and Life Premiums-Premiums for insurance coverage options are available to full time County employees and will be deducted as elected by the employee.
- County Retirement Plan-Employee contributions to the County Retirement Plan are deducted each pay period.
- Corrections-Payroll reporting resulting in any overpayment.
- Elected deductions – Flexible spending accounts, voluntary benefits, and 457 plan.
- Other deductions-May be considered as approved by the Commissioners Court.

3.10 PAYROLL REVIEW DATE	October 1, 2017
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If you were hired prior to October 1, 1994, you will have a payroll review date of October 1.

If you were hired on or after October 1, 1994, your payroll review date will coincide with your anniversary hire date.

Your payroll review date, unlike hire date, may change as you receive promotions to higher pay grades, demotions to lower rank, or leave the County and return later. Standard scheduled merit increases, when granted within your grade do not affect this review date, but significant payroll changes within the classification plan may change your review date.

You should always be familiar with your payroll review date. Step increase reviews within your grade are scheduled on an annual basis. Any questions you may have should be directed to your supervisor or the Personnel Director.

The first 60 days of your new job are considered a training period. Your performance will be monitored and evaluated to determine your ability to perform the job for which you were hired. Your continued employment will depend upon your demonstration of satisfactory job performance.

SECTION 4.00
GENERAL PERSONNEL POLICIES

You are expected to be prompt in getting to work at the beginning of your designated work period.

If you are going to be late or absent for work, you must personally call and speak to your supervisor before the start of the work period. Failure to give proper notification, or excessive absences or tardiness will be grounds for disciplinary action.

If you do not report to work for three consecutive days, you will be considered as having resigned your position

All full time County employees must be at least 18 years of age. Any exceptions to this provision must be approved by action of the Commissioners Court. Minors will require special monitoring to assure compliance with child labor laws. Participants in Federal or State work programs who are covered by program insurance elsewhere are eligible to work within their own program guidelines.

4.03 ANNIVERSARY HIRE DATE	October 9, 2012
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Your anniversary hire date is the first day of the month following your date of hire. This is the date you will begin accruing vacation and sick leave.

4.04 BACKGROUND CHECKS	February 25, 2013
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Every new employee and volunteer Firefighter will be subjected to a background check as part of the employment process. If the background check reveals information which could disqualify them as a Somervell County employee or volunteer Firefighter, they may be discharged.

Background checks will be conducted by the Personnel Director.

If you are involved in an accident with another vehicle while operating a County vehicle, contact the appropriate law enforcement officials immediately. If the accident does not require law enforcement to file a report, ask for the name, address and drivers' license number of the driver and the name and address of the owner if different from the driver. You should also attempt to gather any other pertinent information at the scene and names of any witnesses.

If you are involved in an accident with an object while operating a County vehicle, contact your supervisor or department head. The supervisor or department head will determine if the damage is \$1,000 or more and if so, he/she will call the appropriate law enforcement officials. The supervisor or department head will complete a State Accident Report (known as the Blue Form) for each accident under \$1,000 and submit it to the Auditor.

No matter how minor the accident, you must report it to your supervisor. Additionally, you are required to take pictures of the area(s) of impact to all vehicles, regardless of visible damage to vehicle(s). Pictures must be provided to the County Auditor immediately. Failure to report an accident and provide all information in this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

To make official Somervell County business easier for employees, credit cards will be issued in the name of Somervell County and may be checked out for employee use while traveling. Employees are expected to manage and use the cards wisely, and in accordance with this policy. Cards will be kept and maintained by the Auditor's Office.

CREDIT CARE USE

Credit cards issued to Somervell County employees may be used only for official County business. Authorized usage of cards includes:

- Hotel
- Conference Registration
- Parking
- Tolls
- Air Travel
- Fuel Purchases in County vehicles only.

Unauthorized use of card will not be tolerated.

CREDIT CARD ISSUANCE

Credit cards for the County are held by the Auditor's office and will be checked out upon request and approval of use.

- To obtain a credit card, the County employee must complete a credit card request form and return it to the Auditor's office at least 48 hours in advance of travel.
- The credit card will not be issued without an estimated cost to ensure budgeted funds are available, and a Purchase Order will be required to encumber the funds.

A tax-exempt form will be issued with the credit card. Except for occupancy and city hotel taxes, any taxes charged will be the responsibility of the county employee.

CREDIT CARD LOSS

Lost credit cards should be reported immediately to the County Auditor at 254-897-2923.

BILLING STATEMENTS AND RECEIPTS

Statements from the credit card company will be sent directly to the Somervell County Auditor's Office. Payment of the credit card bill is the responsibility of Somervell County.

Original itemized receipts and Credit Cards must be returned to the County Auditor's Office the following business day after County travel.

- Non-itemized receipts will not be reimbursed by Somervell County; they will be the responsibility of the county employee. Failure to comply will be considered an unauthorized use of the credit card.
- Itemized receipts should be attached to a completed travel expense report and signed by the traveler's Department Head.

ABUSE OF CARD PRIVILEGES

Any unauthorized use of a Somervell County credit card may subject the county employee to loss of employment, and prosecution.

In order for the county Fire Department to participate in wage and equipment use reimbursing Federal or State disaster recovery efforts, pre-authorization must be provided by the County Judge. A written request from a Federal or State disaster recovery program, along with the names of employees and equipment to be deployed must be presented to the Judge for consideration. If authorized, the Fire Department may deploy for a period of no more than seven (7) days, including travel time to and from home base. In the event that the State disaster recovery program requests additional days of assistance, the Fire Chief must submit the extension request from the Federal or State recovery program to the County Judge for prior approval prior to each request for additional days of assistance.

During authorized wage and equipment reimbursing Federal or State recovery deployment, exempt Fire Department and Sheriff's Office personnel will be paid overtime for hours exceeding forty (40) hours per week.

All reimbursements to the county will be deposited into the General Fund.

You are expected to perform your work to ensure that the goals of your department are accomplished effectively and efficiently. This includes being courteous, considerate, and prompt in dealing with the public and your co-workers. Employees who do not meet work requirements or comply with County policies are subject to disciplinary action by their supervisor/department head.

The action taken may vary with each case, depending on the seriousness and frequency of the infraction, but is usually one of the following:

- Verbal Warning.
- Written Reprimand.
- Suspension.
- Demotion.
- Termination.

Examples of reasons for which disciplinary action may be taken include, but are not limited to;

- Unsatisfactory job performance.
- Failure to respond to the orders or representatives of management.
- Falsification of County records, deception or fraud in employment information or records.
- Unacceptable attendance record.
- Unauthorized absence.
- The possession, use of, or being under the influence of drugs or intoxicants.
- Disorderly or immoral conduct.
- Discourteous treatment of the public or other employees.
- Insubordination.
- Breach of confidence or misuse of confidential information.
- Conviction of a criminal offense.
- Any act of discrimination concerning a protected group.
- Improper use, waste, or destruction of County property.
- Chronic griping, malicious gossip, quarreling, scandalous conduct, or other disrespectful actions that distracts from the work effort.
- Violation of the County or department personnel policies.

Any employee either entering a plea of guilty or is found guilty before a court of law of any felony offense, any grade of theft, or any crime involving moral turpitude may be terminated immediately. Termination may occur directly without notice where conditions are in the best interest of the County.

4.08 DISCIPLINARY ACTION	October 9, 2012
	Page 2 of 2

Nothing in this handbook alters the County's at will employment relationship with employees. The County may dismiss any employee at any time, without notice or cause.

The objective of this policy is to maintain a drug and alcohol free workplace. This policy prohibits:

- Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or in an impaired condition,
- The use or possession of unauthorized prescription drugs,
- Using, selling, purchasing, transferring, possessing, manufacturing, or storing any illegal drug or drug paraphernalia, or attempting or assisting another person to do so,
- The manufacturing, distribution, dispensing, possession, sale, purchase or use of a controlled substance or dangerous drug,

while in the course of employment, to include time driving a County vehicle. This policy also prohibits the public consumption of alcohol while wearing a County uniform.

In order to support this policy, management may require an employee to undergo drug and/or alcohol testing when there is reasonable suspicion.

Required Notification:

Employees taking prescribed drugs must advise their direct supervisor of the possible effects of such medication regarding their job performance and mental/physical impairment. This information must be kept confidential, and communicated to the direct supervisor before the employee begins work. In accordance with HIPAA requirements, all medical information must be kept confidential, and any supervisor who commits a breach of confidentiality is subject to disciplinary action. All prescription drugs must be kept in their original containers.

Coordination with Law Enforcement Agencies:

Somervell County will report information concerning possession, distribution, or use of illegal drugs to Law Enforcement officials, and will cooperate fully in any investigation.

Any employee convicted of a drug offense must report the conviction to his/her supervisor within five days.

Definitions:

- **Controlled Substance:** Any substance, including a drug, an adulterant, and a dilutant, listed in Schedules I-V, or Penalty Groups 1, 1-A, or 2 through 4 of Chapter 481 of the Texas Health & safety Code (also known as the “Texas Controlled Substances Act”), as amended.

- **Drug:** A chemical substance that produces physical, mental, emotional or behavioral change in the user.
- **Dangerous Drug:** A drug or device that is unsafe for self-medication and that is not included in Schedules I through V or Penalty Groups 1 through 4 of Chapter 481 of the Texas Health & Safety Code (also known as the “Texas Controlled Substances Act”), as amended.
- **Drug Paraphernalia:** Equipment, a product or material that is used or intended for use in concealing an illegal drug, or for use in injecting, ingesting, inhaling or otherwise introducing into the human body an illegal drug or controlled substance.
- **Illegal Drug:** A drug, or derivative thereof, whose use, possession, sale, transfer, attempted sale or transfer, manufacture or storage of, is illegal or regulated under any law, and any other drug, including (but not limited to), a prescription drug used for any reason other than a legitimate medical reason, and inhalants used illegally.
- **Under The Influence:** A state of having a blood alcohol concentration of 0.08 or more, where: “alcohol concentration” has the meaning assigned to it in Section 49.01 of the Texas Penal Code; or the state of not having the normal use of mental or physical faculties resulting from the voluntary introduction into the body of an alcoholic beverage or a controlled substance. (Exception: All drivers requiring a CDL license will abide by the Federal Register Part VII, Department of Transportation 49CFR Parts 382, 653 and 654, et.al. Controlled Substance and Alcohol Use and Testing).

Whenever you have a problem involving your work, you are to consult your immediate supervisor for a solution.

If you are unable to have your questions answered or your problem solved at your immediate supervisory level, you should use the chain of command up to your department head. The chain of command does not include members of Commissioners' Court.

If your complaint is not resolved at this level, you may file a written complaint alleging that you have been unjustly treated because of the unfair application of, or deviation from, a County policy or departmental practice. Your written complaint must be signed and submitted to the Personnel Director. The Personnel Director will investigate the issue with all parties and attempt to resolve within 5 business days. If the issue cannot be resolved, it will be referred to Commissioners' Court for review.

The Personnel Director is available to assist you with any issues or concerns that may arise at any stage of the dispute resolution process.

Somervell County will not tolerate retaliation for following the dispute resolution process.

An email, just like any other document, can be classified as a government record. Consequently, all emails sent or received by a Somervell County employee are potentially subject to disclosure pursuant to the Public Information Act or in the context of litigation.

Document Retention

County employees are reminded of the mandatory document retention policies found at Texas State Library and Archives Commission's website:

<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slr/recordspubs/localretention.html>, which includes retention schedules for local government and specific departments within local government.

Whether an email is in fact a County record depends on its contents. An email does not become a County record merely by virtue of having been sent to, from, or between County email accounts or on the County's email server. The substance of the email will determine whether it is a County record. As detailed in the document retention policies found at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission's website, email communications which fall within the mandatory document retention policies must be maintained by the County as outlined below.

Procedures for Processing Email Communications

1. Employees of the County shall, upon receipt of an email, read and determine whether the information is to be maintained in accordance with the mandatory document retention policies.
2. After an employee sends an email, the employee shall determine whether the information shall be maintained in accordance with the mandatory document retention policies.
3. If the document, either sent or received, is to be maintained, the employee will:
 - a. Print a hard copy and file in the appropriate place for such records; or
 - b. Save as Microsoft Word document as appropriate.
4. All email communications not subject to document retention shall be deleted as promptly as possible.
5. All emails in the "inbox," or "sent," folders that are not deleted will be automatically deleted by the County's system after one calendar year from date of the email.
6. All emails in the "trash" folder will be deleted after one week.
7. Email access will cease immediately when an individual ceases to be employed by the County and/or is placed on administrative leave for any reason.

Destruction of Records

County records must be maintained in keeping with the requirements established in the Texas State Library and Archives Commission schedules. In addition, the following limitations on document retention/destruction must be observed:

1. Texas Local (Government Code § 202.002) forbids the destruction of a local government record at the expiration of its retention period if the subject matter of the record is known by the custodian to be in litigation or if the record is subject to a pending request for disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act.
2. A record that is subject to a pending audit by a federal or state grantor or sub grantor agency may not be destroyed. Further, such a record may not be destroyed if it relates to a conducted audit until all audit findings are resolved.
3. A record that is related to the subject of pending litigation, including all electronically stored records, must be retained and treated in the same manner as records that are not stored electronically for purposes of discovery in litigation pursuant to Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 16, 26, 34, 37, and 45.

As circumstances dictate, such as the event that the County is subject to a request under the Texas Public information Act or becomes involved in litigation, a "hold" will be enforced as to all records which are or may be related to the subject of the request or litigation and all appropriate personnel will be immediately notified and instructed as to the required action.

The County must have accurate, up to date information to ensure that you are fully informed about your employment and that your benefits are correctly administered. This includes

- Contact information: Your address and telephone number;
- Family status information: Marriage, divorce, birth of a child, etc.

It is your responsibility to notify your supervisor of any changes in your contact or family status information. You should also verify that your paycheck stub reflects any changes you have reported.

The County discourages the employment of close relatives within the same department. A person will usually not be employed in, nor will an employee be transferred to a department where a close relative by blood or marriage (within the third degree of consanguinity or affinity) is currently employed. Any exceptions to this policy must be pre-approved by the Commissioners' Court.

GENERAL PROCEDURES

General inventory items which are no longer required by a department must adhere to the following procedures prior to removing from possession:

1. Document the tag #, serial number, or item description on an inventory transfer form. Transfer forms may be obtained from the Auditor's Department. If there is no associated tag # or serial number, quantity or approximate quantity of item(s) must be documented.
2. A separate photo of each item must be taken. For duplicate items such as matching chairs, one picture may be taken to represent all chairs. For volume duplicate small items, a photo of one individual item along with a photo of all of the boxes, bags, piles, or stacks of the item must be taken.
3. The inventory transfer form and photos must be delivered to the Auditor's Department. The Auditor's Department may approve the transfer or request additional information. Upon approval of transfer, the Auditor's Department will contact Building Maintenance and authorize the transfer. Building Maintenance will contact the department head to schedule the transfer of inventory.

COMPUTER PROCEDURES

Computer inventory items which are no longer required by a department must adhere to the following procedures prior to removing from possession:

- Prior to removal of equipment, contact the I.T. department to inspect items designated for disposal.
- I.T. personnel will decide which items may be moved to inventory and which items will be transferred to I.T. inventory.
- Computer items deemed excess inventory by the I.T. Department will have the hard drive removed, if applicable.
- The I.T. Department will inform the department head that disposal items are ready for processing.
- The department head will follow the procedures set forth in GENERAL PROCEDURES 1 and 2 in the first paragraph of this policy.
- I.T. must sign the transfer form and then the department head will follow procedure 3 in the first paragraph of this policy.
- The I.T. Department must document items transferred to their department on an inventory transfer form and deliver it to the Auditor's office.

The Auditor's Department will initiate inventory auction procedures in January and July, if unwanted inventory is available for disposal.

In some circumstances, it may be necessary to remove an employee from the workplace pending the outcome of an investigation. For an investigatory leave to be warranted, one of the following conditions must be met:

- The department head/HR has a reasonable belief that an employee's continued presence in the workplace raises concerns about the County's resources, disruption in the workplace, or the health, safety, or welfare of the employee, other employees, or customers, or
- The department head/HR is initiating an investigation and the individual's presence in the workplace may impact the investigatory process.

Because the employee remains in paid status during an investigatory leave, County work rules and policies continue to apply. For example, the employee must remain available during that employee's scheduled shift. If an employee is unavailable without notice and authorization, the employee may be regarded as absent without leave and subject to progressive discipline up to and including termination. Department heads should work with Human Resources to communicate these rules and expectations in writing to the employee in a timely manner. An employee may be placed on investigatory leave without prior notice for periods not to exceed 15 calendar days.

The department head should:

- tell the employee that he or she is being placed on investigatory leave and that an investigation will occur,
- request the return of company property (e.g., keys, electronic equipment, files, records) while the leave is pending,
- inform the employee that they must remain available for questions during their normal shift, and
- escort the employee from the worksite.
-

The leave must be confirmed in writing to the employee no later than three working days after the leave commences. This written notice must explain the reasons for the investigatory leave and direct the employee to remain available during the leave to participate in investigative interviewing.

The department head, in consultation with the HR department, will conduct, or appoint a person to conduct, a prompt and thorough investigation of the allegations or charges.

EMERGENCIES

Circumstances may occur in which the need to remove an employee is emergent and obvious (e.g., when an employee commits an act of violence). In such cases, department heads should contact law enforcement by dialing 911 for assistance in removing the employee from the workplace. Where the need is less pressing, department heads are urged to consult with Human Resources prior to removing the employee from the workplace.

As a County employee, your primary responsibility is to serve the people of Somervell County. You are expected to interact professionally with the public and fellow employees, within the scope of your job responsibility.

In the course of your work, you are also expected to practice such things as:

- Accountability to taxpayers;
- Maintaining positive working relationships;
- Efficiency;
- Good housekeeping;
- Punctuality and good attendance;
- Safety awareness; and
- Honesty.

The County supports internal promotional opportunities when possible. If an internal promotion is not appropriate, the vacancy will be posted either internally or publicly. Internal postings will be placed on the bulletin board in the Annex, Historic Courthouse, Courthouse lawn, and will be distributed to County satellite offices for posting. Public postings may include the bulletin boards, newspaper ads, the County web site, and the Texas Workforce Commission Job listings.

The Somervell County Human Resource Department is the central point of intake for all applicants and the source for distribution of the official County application form, however; the Sheriff's Department will distribute, accept, and process applicants under their own established system.

Applications will be accepted only for a specific posted opening and may not be considered for subsequent vacancies.

The Department Head where the vacancy exists will make the decision as to which candidate will be offered the position. All job offers are contingent upon passing Somervell County minimum requirements for employment. Minimum requirements may include, but are not limited to, a background check, physical, urine screen, and verification of minimum requirements specific to the position. Minimum requirement investigations will be conducted by the Personnel Director. County physicals or urine screens must be completed within five business days of notice by the Personnel Director. In the event that the investigation returns results that do not meet the standards for Somervell County employment, the Personnel Director will discuss the findings with the Department Head. If questions arise, the information will be submitted to the County Judge for resolution.

Somervell County is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer and fills positions based upon qualifications without regard to race, creed, religion, color, sex, age, marital status, or disability.

The County retains the right to refrain from filling an opening or to re-open the application process at a later date.

The county retains the right to modify or revise these rules in a given situation if it is determined to be in the best interest of the County.

Once hired, all County employees are expected to read, understand, and fully abide by County rules, procedures, and policies as provided for in the Employee Handbook which includes, but is not limited to, the Personnel Policies, the Safety Manual, and the Hazard Communication Program.

4.17 JOB VACANCIES	July 13, 2015
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Employment with the County is voluntary and is subject to termination by you or the County at will, with or without cause, and with or without notice, at any time. Nothing in the Somervell County Employee Handbook shall be interpreted to be in conflict with or to eliminate or modify in any way the employment-at-will status of Somervell County employees.

Any questions regarding these procedures as outlined herein should be brought to the attention of the Somervell County Human Resource Department.

All operators of County owned or leased motorized vehicles are required to obey all traffic laws. It is the operator's responsibility to prevent accidents and ensure that routine maintenance is performed. All operators of motorized vehicles must immediately notify their supervisor of any problems that need to be corrected.

Employees and volunteer firefighters who operate motorized vehicles as a part of their job must maintain a good driving record. Somervell County will obtain annual Motor Vehicle Driving Records on all employees and volunteer firefighters who operate motorized vehicles. Excessive moving violations may result in corrective action up to and including termination. Continued authorization to operate a County motorized vehicle will be subject to review if the following are found:

- Two or more moving violations in a 24 month period.
- Two or more at-fault crashes in a 48 month period.
- DWI / DUI.
- Suspended License.

The above list is not all inclusive. An operator of a County motorized vehicle must, upon conviction for any State or local moving violation, notify his/her department head within 30 days. The notification must be in writing and must include:

- Driver's full name,
- Driver's license number,
- Date of conviction,
- Details about the offense, including any resulting suspension, revocation, or cancellation of driving privileges,
- Indication of whether the violation happened in a CMV (for CDL employed drivers),
- Location of offense, and
- Driver's signature.

Failure to adhere to notification requirements may be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Employees and volunteer firefighters may use County motorized vehicles only for County business. Only a County employee may operate or be a passenger in County vehicles, except for:

- Employees of the State of Texas or other States,
- Sheriff Department prisoners or mental patients,
- Medical or other emergency situations,
- Expo Center tours and marketing use,
- Ambulance Service Customers,
- Volunteer Firefighters,
Pro Shop Staff, and
- Fire Department Ride-Along Participants.

Employees who are authorized to take a County vehicle home must sign a form stating that they will use the vehicle only for County business. Use of a County vehicle for personal business may result in disciplinary action.

The intent of the performance evaluation is to identify strengths and weaknesses in your job performance and to provide a framework for capitalizing on your strengths and improving on weaknesses.

Your performance may be reviewed at the end of your sixty day training / evaluation period. You will be evaluated on such things as: job knowledge, performance, productivity, and dependability.

Additional reviews will be made thereafter annually as determined by your department and supervisor, or pursuant to the Time In Step Table.

Your supervisor will review your performance evaluation with you. Areas are provided for signature by both parties. Your performance evaluation will become a part of your employee file and you will receive a copy.

You represent the County to the public and to fellow employees; therefore, your personal appearance should leave the best possible impression.

You are expected to dress neatly and safely in relation to your job and in keeping with all safety requirements, and to maintain a high standard of personal cleanliness and grooming.

Employees in certain positions may be required to wear uniforms to maintain an association with the department in which they work.

Effective September 1, 2019, Senate Bill 944 requires public information on private devices to be archived to a government server. Any means of electronic communication used for the purpose of official county business is subject to the Act. This encompasses text messaging, chat services, social media accounts, and personal email accounts from your personal phone.

It is understood that electronic communications (i.e. texting, etc.) has become an integral part of the communication process in conducting County business; however, archiving communications under the above conditions has been deemed unfeasible; and therefore, Somervell County has determined that these types of communications are strictly forbidden on personal devices or personal accounts such as Instagram, Twitter, Text Messaging, Chat Rooms, etc.

For those positions that the Court deems highly reliant on electronic communications, a County supplied mobile device will be issued. Positions that do not receive a County issued mobile device may make a request to their department head for approval. It will be at the discretion of the department head to make a request to the Court.

Local Government Code Section 113.901 requires counties to use a requisitioning system to purchase goods and services. The requisition must be requested by the County office ordering the purchase. A purchase order must be obtained from the Auditor's Office for all purchases. A purchase order makes the purchase a binding contract between the County and vendor and also serves as a tracking instrument to help locate necessary supporting documents.

Any commitment to acquire goods or services without an authorized purchase order is prohibited, and the employee may be held personally responsible for the payment.

At the beginning of each budget year an itemized list of pre-approved equipment/furniture and capital projects will be provided to the Auditor's Office. Any item not on the list supplied to the Auditor must be approved by the Commissioners' Court before a purchase order will be issued.

PURCHASES LESS THAN \$4,999.99

No formal bid procedures are required; however, departments are expected to purchase supplies, equipment and services of the necessary quality at the lowest possible cost. Purchase locally when possible, if quality, service and price are equal to or better than other vendors outside the County.

PURCHASES \$5,000 - \$49,999.99

Purchases costing between \$5,000 - \$49,999.99 of goods and services require three written requests for price quotations.

The department sends quote requests to at least three (3) vendors for the pre-approved item. The list of vendors should be rotated so that, over time, all vendors are contacted equally.

The price quotes shall contain the following information:

- Signed Name/Address of vendor
- Detailed description of Item
- Quantity required
- Total Cost which should include all costs such as shipping, installation, etc.

The written quotes must be forwarded to the County Auditor's Office before purchase. After review of the quotes a Purchase Order will be issued to the lowest/best quote and the purchase may be made.

Local businesses can be no more than 10% higher than the lowest bid and still be awarded the bid.

Any purchase involving a trade-in of existing County equipment must be placed on the agenda and approved through Commissioners' Court prior to the purchase.

Purchases may not be split to avoid bid requirements. Intentionally separating purchases/invoices to avoid bidding requirements is a violation of the Purchasing Act §262.034 and §262.035

EXCEPTIONS

There are a few exceptions to the formal bid process for purchases between \$5,000 and \$49,999.

- Declaration of an emergency by the County Judge.
- Repairs for less than \$15,000 to essential equipment, such as when “captive repair parts” must be used to repair equipment the County currently owns (HVAC, Heavy road Equipment, etc.)
- Purchases made upon the authority of another government bid award where an inter-local agreement between the governments must be in place, or purchases thru a GSA Schedule.
- Sole Source Provider. It is a rare situation that only one supplier can meet departmental needs; however, if this occurs, a Sole Source Justification Form must be completed. Completion of the form does not guarantee approval by the Auditor's Office. Sufficient time must be given to review, evaluate, and determine that the product/service does qualify as sole source.
- Professional services less than \$25,000 (i.e. accountants, architects, engineers, attorneys).

PURCHASES OVER \$50,000

All County contracts for the purchase of goods and services, except contracts for the purchase of produce or vehicle fuel, valued at \$50,000.00 or more in the aggregate for each 12-month period, shall be made by the method that provides the best value for the County and must comply with the Local Government Code Section 262 under advertised and sealed bids. With approval of the Court, a purchase in the amount of \$50,000.00 or more can be made through BuyBoard, HGAC, or the Texas Smartbuy System.

Call the Auditor/Purchasing Agent and tell them the item you wish to purchase complete with details or specifications about that item.

The agent will put this item on the Court Agenda for the Commissioners to approve either:

- Approve the advertising for sealed bids for this item. Once approved, the Agent will advertise and send out for sealed bids. The bids will be received in the Auditor's Office and opened in Commissioners' Court. Bids will be evaluated and the best/lowest bid will be selected. The items will be placed on the Agenda for the Court to award to the vendor, and upon approval, a purchase order will be issued.
- Approve the purchase thru BuyBoard, HGAC, or Texas Smartbuy System. At least three written quotes are required from vendors approved through these coops. Once approved, the Agent will issue a purchase order and complete the order thru the approved organization.

LEASES/RENTALS/AGREEMENTS

Purchases of goods and services that are of a nature that constitute an obligation to Somervell County beyond Thirty (30) days require Commissioner's Court approval before entering into a contract. Prime examples include: Copy or Postage Machine Rentals, Computer Service Contract, Ice Machine Leases, or other maintenance related expenditures, such as Floor Maintenance.

UNUSED BUDGETED FUNDS

After receiving the final invoice for the item purchased, any remaining money budgeted for that item will be transferred into a contingency capital account. A budget transfer will be put on the agenda for approval to move the remaining budget from the department's budget to the contingency capital account.

UNPLANNED EQUIPMENT/FURNITURE NEEDS

The department must submit a request to purchase the item. If funds are available in the contingency capital account, the request will be placed on the agenda for approval, and a budget transfer will be done to transfer funds from the contingency account to the department's budget line.

DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Ensure sales tax is not charged to the County.

Ensure all computer and related items (scanners, printers, monitors, software) are processed through and approved by the MIS director.

Provide all statements, invoices, packing slips, receipts and any other documentation that is used for billing to the Auditor's Office in a timely manner. At least once a week, all paperwork should be submitted. All documentation must be signed by an employee of the receiving office.

When items over \$100 are received, the Auditor's Office must be notified within one business day to arrange for physical inspection, inventory tagging, and if required, added to the insurance policy. Smaller items may be brought by the Auditor's Office for immediate tagging.

It is hereby ordered by Somervell County Commissioners' Court that discretionary purchases of supplies, materials, and equipment shall be limited during each and every August and September from the date of this policy. The maximum dollar limit shall be equal to one-twelfth (1/12) of the annual approved budget for each budgeted line item which is subject to advance approval of the Somervell County Auditor, as stipulated for any and all purchases subject to the purchasing statutes cited at Local Government code 262, which:

- Has not already been either exempted from approval, or
- Is already under contract by the County, or
- Is demonstrated to be a legitimate emergency acquisition, or
- Was originally budgeted as a quarter-annual, semi-annual or annual payment in the adopted budget for that particular object.

Specifically excluded from this order are expenditures that are:

- Court ordered payments;
- Public utility billings;
- Telephone billings;
- Remittances to the State Comptroller, or other regulatory payments required;
- Debt service payments;
- Payroll disbursements including payments of payroll taxes and retirement funds;
- Periodic subsidies already appropriated by Commissioners' Court;
- Travel, transportation and education;
- Lease payments for equipment already under contract;
- Such other objects or expenditures as Commissioners' Court may from time to time deem appropriate.

4.24 REDUCTION IN FORCE	August 11, 2014
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Full time employees that do not receive a minimum of two weeks notice of reduction in force are eligible to receive severance pay equal to one pay period at their current salary.

Receipt of the full amount of severance pay is subject to the Wage Deduction Authorization Agreement.

An in-service distribution is either a retirement benefit or an account withdrawal to an employee who is still employed with the County. These types of distributions are impermissible under federal and state law. An in-service distribution invalidates the employee's retirement or withdrawal. If it is not corrected by the return of benefit payments or the withdrawn amount (by either the employee or the employer), then it could jeopardize the County's TCDRS retirement plan's qualified status with the IRS.

For this reason, former County employees must be separated from County employment for one full calendar month prior to returning to County service.

If you sustain an on-the-job injury, you or a member of your work group must report the injury to your supervisor immediately.

Accidents not reported may result in problems in obtaining benefits, if complications result from the non-reported injury at a later date. Failure to report an incident immediately may be grounds for disciplinary action or dismissal.

For information about on-the-job injury benefits, refer to the Workers' Compensation section.

To resign in good standing, you must submit your resignation in writing to your supervisor at least two weeks before termination. If an emergency situation prevents you from giving two weeks notice, you may request a waiver from your supervisor. All documentation will be submitted to the Personnel Department.

Any employee who is absent for three consecutive days without notifying his/her supervisor will be deemed to have resigned.

If determined to be in the best interest of the County, an employee's resignation may be accepted immediately.

4.28 SAFETY	October 9, 2012
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Your safety is of prime importance to the County. For this reason, the County has developed a safety manual that covers policy on general and specific safety issues. It is your responsibility to read and follow the safety manual.

The County discourages contact between salespeople or solicitors and employees, customers or visitors in County facilities and during working hours. You should report any such contact to your supervisor, department head or the Personnel Department.

You are encouraged to suggest better and improved methods of accomplishing your job, which may result in improved productivity and savings to the County. Reducing waste, conserving time, using materials or supplies effectively can result in better work with less cost.

Submit your suggestion in writing to your supervisor, or the Personnel Department, or place it in the suggestion box located in the Annex, describing how your suggestions will increase productivity and/or savings. Department heads or the Commissioners' Court will review suggestions.

Termination forms will be initiated by the employee's department head and emailed to the Human Resource office. Resignation letters will not be accepted unless accompanied by a Termination Form. The H.R. Director will sign, print a copy to be placed in the personnel file, and forward the document to the Treasurer's Office.

All termination issues will be addressed to and/or through the Human Resource office. If the H.R. Director is not available, the matter will be referred to the County Judge or a County Commissioner, in that order.

Training is important if you desire to advance in your job, enhance your career and produce top quality work for the County.

In addition to on-the-job training, formal training may be necessary for job enrichment or advancement. The County provides opportunities for extra or specialized training. If you are interested in additional training, ask your supervisor about available opportunities.

County employees should use every effort to arrange travel in the most economical way possible since these expenses are being paid by the taxpayers of Somervell County. While traveling, the employees are to be mindful that they are representing Somervell County at all times and are expected to conduct themselves accordingly. Failure to maintain professional behavior or to cause the County embarrassment of any kind may result in termination of your ability to travel on behalf of Somervell County.

The County will reimburse approved travel expenses for transportation, lodging and parking only. The County shall reimburse mileage for personal vehicle use on approved County travel in an amount equal to the Standard Business Mileage Rate set by the IRS. Parking shall be reimbursed at the self-parking rate. Valet parking will only be reimbursed if a self-parking option is not available. A detailed receipt from the hotel must be submitted to the County Auditor within 10 days of the employee returning to work. Lodging expenses shall only be permitted if the location is more than 100 miles from your workplace. For lodging expenses in a location less than 100 miles from your workplace, prior approval must be received from the County Judge in order for the expense to be reimbursed. Failure to acquire the necessary prior approval will result in the expenses request being denied.

Employees who are required to be away from home for more than 1 day on County approved travel shall be paid a per diem of \$36.00 to cover meals and incidental expenses. A rate of \$18.00 shall be paid on the first and last day of travel. Since this is a per diem payment, no receipts for meal or incidental expenses are required to be submitted. The per diem shall be paid upon the completion of the travel and documented on a travel reimbursement request form available from the Auditor's office.

Employees who have approved meal expenses during the course of their normal workday must be reimbursed through payroll in accordance with all applicable IRS requirements. As such, the original detailed receipts (not just the credit card signature slip) must be presented to the County Auditor on a travel reimbursement request form. The maximum daily limit for meals is \$36.00 with no exceptions.

Employees wishing to use commercial flights to travel to a meeting or conference are permitted to do so, however, the maximum amount of reimbursement available will be the lesser of the estimated mileage reimbursement had the employee used their vehicle to travel to the destination, or the actual amount of the round trip airline ticket including all fees, airport parking and transfers including taxi or bus fares. The County will reimburse the employee for mileage on their personal vehicle for travel to and from the nearest airport.

Any out of state travel is required to be approved in advance by the Commissioners Court. If time does not allow for full court approval, the County Judge can grant approval on a case by case basis.

The request for a prepayment check or reimbursement to attend training must include a copy of the training brochure. The County will reimburse only those expenses that are necessary to attend the training.

The County workweek for payroll purposes starts Wednesday morning at 12:01 AM and goes through Tuesday midnight.

The normal work week is Monday through Friday. You will be assigned a work schedule according to the needs of your department. You may not change your work schedule without your supervisor's prior approval. You may not work more than 40 hours in one work week unless overtime has been preauthorized.

An hour for lunch is considered routine, and you may be allowed a mid-morning and mid-afternoon break of 15 minutes. Breaks are not required by law. You may not accrue unused breaks.

Based on County needs, you are required, when directed, to work outside of your regular schedule and department.

You are expected to stay in your assigned work areas during work hours. You are responsible for the general cleanliness of your work area. Keeping your work area clean and orderly promotes safety and efficiency.

If work habits, attitude, production or personal conduct of an employee falls below a desirable standard, supervisors should point out the deficiencies at the time they are observed.

Counseling in sufficient time for improvement will, if possible, precede formal discipline, but nothing shall prevent formal action whenever the interests of the County requires it.

**SECTION 5.00
LEAVE POLICIES**

Full time employees may be allowed up to twenty-four hours of leave, with pay, per calendar year for a death in your immediate family. Immediate family for this purpose means your parent, grandparent, spouse, son, daughter, brother, sister, father-in-law or mother-in-law.

Bereavement leave is a permissive benefit and requires pre-approval.

Holidays are set by the Commissioners Court at the beginning of each calendar year, with the approved list posted in each County facility. Full time employees are entitled to eight hours of holiday pay for each County recognized holiday. If an employee is required to work on a recognized County holiday, he/she will be paid for the time worked on the holiday in addition to the holiday pay.

The following days are generally recognized as paid holidays for County employees.

NEW YEAR'S DAY
PRESIDENTS' DAY
GOOD FRIDAY
MEMORIAL DAY
INDEPENDENCE DAY

LABOR DAY
COLUMBUS DAY
VETERANS' DAY
THANKSGIVING (2 Days)
CHRISTMAS (2 Days)

If the holiday falls on a Saturday, it is observed on the preceding Friday. If it falls on a Sunday, it is observed on the following Monday.

An employee absent from work the last regular workday before or after a holiday, other than for sickness or prior approved leave, forfeits the holiday pay.

The County Judge or his/her designee will make the decision regarding closure or delayed opening of services due to bad weather. Notification to employees and elected officials will be via our Code Red telephone system. Each employee will receive a pre-recorded call alerting them to the decision. Closures or delayed openings will also be posted on Somervell County's website.

Only essential personnel shall report during official closure or delayed openings (Law Enforcement, Emergency Medical Personnel and selected County employees). Only employees determined to be essential will receive additional bad weather pay. Employees not required to work will receive their normal pay.

5.04 JURY LEAVE	October 9, 2012
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If you are a full-time employee called for jury duty, you will be granted leave for the number of days of service for up to eight hours per day. Notify your supervisor as soon as possible when you receive a jury summons. You must also provide documentation of jury service. Employees must report to work before jury service, if time allows, and immediately after dismissal.

5.05 PAID LEAVE	October 9, 2012
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Paid leave includes inclement weather day(s), vacation, holiday, sick leave, bereavement leave, and jury duty. For additional information on each type of paid leave, see the appropriate index heading in this handbook.

Sick leave with pay is provided so that you will not suffer serious financial hardship if you are unable to work because of illness.

If you have more than six months of continuous service as a full time employee, you are entitled to 40 hrs. accrued sick leave.

Sick leave will be computed on the basis of a work year beginning on the anniversary hire date for each employee. Sick leave cannot be used before it is accrued.

Full-time employees will accrue 6.68 hours of sick leave for each month of service to a maximum of 480 hours. These accrue at the rate of 3.34 hours per pay period.

Full-time employees who work a 12-month period without using any sick leave or leave without pay earn twenty-four hours of bonus time per year. The twenty-four hours of bonus time must be used within the 12 months after they are awarded.

Sick leave can be used for your own health care needs or to care for your spouse, child, grandchild, grandparent or parent. Your department head may ask for a doctor's statement certifying your reason for any sick leave absence. Any sickness resulting in an absence of at least three working days may require a doctor's statement to be paid for sick leave.

Maternity leave is considered to be sick leave and subject to the provisions of this policy.

Sick leave may not be used for:

- Disability arising from any sickness or injury purposely inflicted or caused by willful misconduct;
- inability to work because of intoxication; or
- disability acquired as a result of other employment.

Abuse of sick leave benefits may result in disciplinary action. Unused sick leave is not paid at termination.

It is the County's policy that if your leave qualifies for FMLA coverage and you have not requested coverage, the County will designate the leave as FMLA protected and will inform you of this in writing.

Sick leave with pay is provided so that you will not suffer serious financial hardship if you are unable to work because of illness.

207(k) employees whose regular daily shift is a minimum of 12 hours per day.

If you have more than six months of continuous service as a full time employee, you are entitled to 60 hrs. accrued sick leave.

Sick leave will be computed on the basis of a work year beginning on the anniversary hire date for each employee. Sick leave cannot be used before it is accrued.

Full-time employees will accrue 10 hours of sick leave for each month of service to a maximum of 720 hours. These accrue at the rate of 5 hours per pay period.

Employees in this category whose regular daily shift is changed to a minimum of 8 hours per day will have their unused accrued sick leave, which was earned at this rate, reduced by approximately 1.5%.

207(k) employees whose regular daily shift is a minimum of 24 hours per day.

If you have more than six months of continuous service as a full time employee, you are entitled to 120 hrs. accrued sick leave.

Sick leave will be computed on the basis of a work year beginning on the anniversary hire date for each employee. Sick leave cannot be used before it is accrued.

Full-time employees will accrue 20 hours of sick leave for each month of service to a maximum of 1,440 hours. These accrue at the rate of 10 hours per pay period.

Employees in this category whose regular daily shift is changed to a minimum of 12 hours per day will have their unused accrued sick leave, which was earned at this rate, reduced by approximately 1.5%.

Employees in this category whose regular daily shift is changed to a minimum of 8 hours per day will have their unused accrued sick leave, which was earned at this rate, reduced by approximately 3%.

Full-time employees who work a 12-month period without using any sick leave or leave without pay earn twenty-four hours of bonus time per year. The twenty-four hours of bonus time must be used within the 12 months after they are awarded.

Sick leave can be used for your own health care needs or to care for your spouse, child, grandchild, grandparent or parent. Your department head may ask for a doctor's statement certifying your reason for any sick leave absence. Any sickness resulting in an absence of at least three working days may require a doctor's statement to be paid for sick leave.

Maternity leave is considered to be sick leave and subject to the provisions of this policy.

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- Disability arising from any sickness or injury purposely inflicted or caused by willful misconduct;
- inability to work because of intoxication; or
- disability acquired as a result of other employment.

Abuse of sick leave benefits may result in disciplinary action. Unused sick leave is not paid at termination.

It is the County's policy that if your leave qualifies for FMLA coverage and you have not requested coverage, the County will designate the leave as FMLA protected and will inform you of this in writing.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Sick Leave Pool, hereinafter referred to as the Pool, is to provide additional sick leave time to employees in the event of a catastrophic illness or injury that prevents an employee from active employment. Withdrawals may be granted from the Pool only after the employee has exhausted all accrued leave time.

DEFINITIONS

Catastrophic illness or injury - A severe condition or combination of conditions affecting the physical health of the employee that requires the services of a licensed practitioner for a period of thirty (30) calendar days and that forces the employee to exhaust all earned leave time.

Eligible Employee - A full-time County employee with twelve (12) or more months of continuous employment, who is paid from the general fund of the County, from a special fund of the County or from special grants paid through the County, and a member of the Pool.

Enrollment Period - Employees may only enroll in the Pool between October 1st through October 31st and April 1st through April 30th. Membership is effective for one twelve (12) month period beginning the first day of the following month after the enrollment period.

Maximum Pool Award - 480 hours or 1/3 of the total amount of the available Pool time, whichever is less, within one rolling twelve (12) month period. Additionally, no employee may receive or use leave time from the Pool once he/she has been off active-duty work, for any reason, for 26 weeks or more.

Pool Administrator - The County Treasurer will serve as the Pool Administrator, hereinafter referred to as the Administrator.

Pool Committee - The Pool Committee members, hereinafter referred to as the Committee, will consist of the Administrator, County Judge, County / District Clerk; and County Auditor in the capacity of Alternate. The Committee is responsible for reviewing all employee applications for withdrawal from the Pool and will serve in an advisory capacity to the Administrator. A simple quorum of the Committee members will be required to approve or deny an application. In the event of a tie vote, the Alternate shall vote in order to break the tie. If a direct report of one of the Committee members requests a withdrawal from the Pool, that member shall abstain from voting.

Use of Sick Leave Pool Award - The employee may not choose when the awarded time will be used. Awarded Pool time will be deducted from the employee's total award to cover time not worked, including holidays, and according to the employee's normal and usual work schedule. Employees will not accrue vacation and sick leave while using awarded Pool time.

IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD

The implementation period for this program will begin upon approval of this policy by Commissioners' Court and will close at the end of April 2015. All eligible employees will be accepted for membership into the Pool during the first thirty days of the program and upon submission of a membership application. Membership for the implementation period will expire at the end of October 2015. Employees are not required, but are encouraged to contribute sick leave time during this period; however, contribution guidelines will apply. Additional rules may be waived during the initial membership period of this policy and at the discretion of the Committee.

PROCEDURE

Enrollment

Beginning with the first enrollment period of April 2015 and each enrollment period thereafter, employees who enroll in the Pool must contribute a minimum of eight (8) sick leave hours. A contribution to the Pool will not affect eligibility for bonus time as defined in the Sick Leave policy.

While employees are only required to contribute one day or eight (8) hours, they may contribute up to five days or forty (40) hours of accrued sick leave to the Pool each calendar year, in increments of eight hours. Upon separation of employment, employees may contribute up to ten (10) days or eighty (80) hours of sick leave to the Pool in accordance with Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 157, Subchapter E, Section 157.074 (c).

Any contributions made are strictly voluntary and once made, contributions may not be revoked. Contributions may only be made to the Pool in general and employees may not stipulate who will receive them.

It is the responsibility of employees to track their own leave balances and initiate enrollment when they have a sufficient balance to do so as described above.

Application

Any employee (or employee family member on behalf of the employee) who requests withdrawal from the Pool is required to:

- Submit a completed Pool application and Medical Certification of Illness/Injury form to the Administrator.
- Submit application documents no more than (5) days prior to exhausting all accrued leave time to avoid a gap in compensation.
- Provide additional information or documentation if requested by the Committee.
- Prior to returning to work, provide a Fitness for Duty form to the Administrator.
- Currently be on, or have exhausted Family Medical Leave for the current designated twelve month period as defined by Somervell County.
- Be ineligible for Worker's Compensation.

If a current medical certification has been submitted for purposes of Family and Medical Leave, and it covers the same period of requested Pool leave, the Committee may choose to permit a copy of that medical certification to be used.

Review

The Committee will meet within three business days of receipt of a Pool application. The Committee will review the submitted documents and will vote to approve or deny the request. If approved, the Committee retains the right to modify the award amount. The decision of the Committee is final.

Denial

If the application is denied, the Administrator will inform the employee. If the circumstances surrounding the employee's illness change, the employee may reapply to the Committee.

Approval

If the application is approved, the Administrator will inform the employee and direct payroll to transfer the awarded time from the Pool to the employee.

The Committee may require an employee who has been awarded time from the Pool to undergo periodic return visits to his or her Licensed Health Practitioner to assess progress and make continuing reports to the Committee. If the Committee determines that the employee is no longer eligible to receive time from the Pool, the Committee will notify payroll to withdraw the remaining grant of Pool time from the employee and return it to the Pool. Reason's for ineligibility, include, but are not limited to, full-time return to work, separation from work, or non-compliance with additional documentation requests.

Each employee who receives an award from the Pool must return to work after he/she has been released by his or her Licensed Health Practitioner. A Fitness for Duty Form must be completed by a Licensed Health Practitioner and be returned to the Administrator before an employee on a Pool award may return to work.

Allocated time from the Pool shall be included in computing an employee's length of service with the County. Use of Pool time may not be considered in performance reviews or consideration for scheduled raises.

DISCLAIMER

The availability of an employee's accrued or granted leave time is not a guarantee of continued employment.

PROVISIONS

The County may discontinue the Pool upon thirty (30) days notice to all employees who are participating in the Pool and the remaining Pool hours will be dissolved.

The guidelines, terms and conditions of the Pool may be amended at any time, upon approval of Commissioners' Court.

After you have successfully completed your probation period and continue to meet one of the criteria below, you will be entitled to vacation benefits.

Full-time employees with more than six (6) months of continuous service are entitled to 40 hours vacation. These accrue at the rate of 3.34 hours per pay period.

Full-time employees with more than one (1) year of continuous service are entitled to 80 hours of vacation after earning at the 3.34 hours per pay period rate over that year, with a maximum accrual of 120 hours.

Full-time employees with more than ten (10) years of continuous service are entitled to 120 hours vacation. The earning accrual rate is 5 hours vacation per pay period, with a maximum accrual of 180 hours.

Full-time employees with more than fifteen (15) years of continuous service are entitled to 160 hours vacation. The earning accrual rate is 6.67 hours vacation per pay period, with a maximum accrual of 240 hours.

Vacation time will be computed on the basis of a work year beginning on the anniversary hire date for each employee. Vacation time cannot be used before it is accrued. Official holidays will not count against vacation time.

You must schedule vacation in advance. Your request for vacation leave must be made to and approved by your supervisor. Vacation time will not be approved for a period of less than 30 minutes and must be used in quarter hour increments. Your Supervisor, Department Head or Elected Official will attempt to accommodate your vacation request; however, workloads will take precedence.

You will not be paid for unused vacation upon work separation due to termination, reduction in force, or resignation. You may not use accrued vacation time during the two weeks immediately before your effective date of retirement or resignation. You are expected to be physically present at your work site the last two weeks of employment. This does not apply to leave attributed to Workers' Compensation or Family Medical Leave.

This policy does not affect payment of unused vacation time that was accrued before January 18, 2012, however; use of accrued vacation after January 7, 2015 will be charged against vacation time accrued prior to January 18, 2012 first, until exhausted.

It is the County's policy that if your leave qualifies for FMLA coverage and you have not requested coverage, the County will designate the leave as FMLA protected and will inform you of this in writing.

After you have successfully completed your probation period and continue to meet one of the criteria below, you will be entitled to vacation benefits.

207(k) employees whose regular daily shift is a minimum of 12 hours per day.

Full-time employees with more than six (6) months of continuous service are entitled to 60 hours vacation. These accrue at the rate of 5 hours per pay period.

Full-time employees with more than one (1) year of continuous service are entitled to 120 hours of vacation after earning at the 5 hours per pay period rate over that year, with a maximum accrual of 180 hours.

Full-time employees with more than ten (10) years of continuous service are entitled to 180 hours vacation. The earning accrual rate is 7.5 hours vacation per pay period, with a maximum accrual of 270 hours.

Full-time employees with more than fifteen (15) years of continuous service are entitled to 240 hours vacation. The earning accrual rate is 10 hours vacation per pay period, with a maximum accrual of 360 hours.

Employees in this category whose regular daily shift is changed to a minimum of 8 hours per day will have their unused accrued vacation leave, which was earned at this rate, reduced by approximately 1.5%.

207(k) employees whose regular daily shift is a minimum of 24 hours per day.

Full-time employees with more than six (6) months of continuous service are entitled to 120 hours vacation. These accrue at the rate of 10 hours per pay period.

Full-time employees with more than one (1) year of continuous service are entitled to 240 hours of vacation after earning at the 10 hours per pay period rate over that year, with a maximum accrual of 360 hours.

Full-time employees with more than ten (10) years of continuous service are entitled to 360 hours vacation. The earning accrual rate is 15 hours vacation per pay period, with a maximum accrual of 540 hours.

Full-time employees with more than fifteen (15) years of continuous service are entitled to 480 hours vacation. The earning accrual rate is 20 hours vacation per pay period, with a maximum accrual of 720 hours.

Employees in this category whose regular daily shift is changed to a minimum of 12 hours per day will have their unused accrued vacation leave, which was earned at this rate, reduced by approximately 3%.

Employees in this category whose regular daily shift is changed to a minimum of 8 hours per day will have their unused accrued vacation leave, which was earned at this rate, reduced by approximately 1.5%.

Vacation time will be computed on the basis of a work year beginning on the anniversary hire date for each employee. Vacation time cannot be used before it is accrued. Official holidays will not count against vacation time.

You must schedule vacation in advance. Your request for vacation leave must be made to and approved by your supervisor. Vacation time will not be approved for a period of less than 30 minutes and must be used in quarter hour increments. Your Supervisor, Department Head or Elected Official will attempt to accommodate your vacation request; however, workloads will take precedence.

You will not be paid for unused vacation upon work separation due to termination, reduction in force, or resignation. You may not use accrued vacation time during the two weeks immediately before your effective date of retirement or resignation. You are expected to be physically present at your work site the last two weeks of employment. This does not apply to leave attributed to Workers' Compensation or Family Medical Leave.

This policy does not affect payment of unused vacation time that was accrued before January 18, 2012, however; use of accrued vacation after January 7, 2015 will be charged against vacation time accrued prior to January 18, 2012 first, until exhausted.

It is the County's policy that if your leave qualifies for FMLA coverage and you have not requested coverage, the County will designate the leave as FMLA protected and will inform you of this in writing.

SECTION 6.00
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Somervell County provides the following benefits to full-time employees at no cost:

- Medical insurance
- Dental insurance
- Life insurance (\$50,000)
- Accidental Death & Dismemberment insurance (\$50,000)

You may choose to enroll your eligible dependents in the Medical and Dental plans. You pay the full cost of medical and dental coverage for your enrolled dependents.

The County also offers several voluntary sickness and accident plans. You pay the entire cost of these options.

Somervell County offers employee benefits through a section 125 cafeteria plan. Section 125 benefits allow you to set aside a portion of your pay before taxes are withheld to pay for eligible expenses. Benefit options available are:

- Tax shelter of premiums for dependent coverage and eligible voluntary benefits,
- Health care flexible spending account after six months of full time employment, and
- Dependent care spending account.

You must enroll within 31 days of the date you first become eligible or first acquire an eligible dependent.

If you don't enroll during this 31-day period, your next opportunity to elect coverage will be during the annual Open Enrollment period, with a coverage effective date of October 1.

Your elections remain in effect for the rest of the plan year unless you have a qualifying Change in Family Status, including but not limited to:

- Birth or legal adoption of a child
- Marriage or divorce
- Death of a dependent
- A dependent's loss of eligibility for coverage or
- Your spouse's gaining or losing health care coverage.

Any new elections you make as a result of a Change in Family Status must be made within 31 days of the qualifying event.

You should attend Open Enrollment meetings held each September for more information about plan benefits, eligibility, enrollment and coverage effective dates.

You are required to enroll in the Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS). Your contribution to the retirement fund is 7% (or other percentage as may be provided by the TCDRS) of gross wages, which is deducted from your pay check and credited to your individual retirement account. In addition to your contribution, the County funds the retirement plan with monthly contributions determined annually by the Commissioners Court.

You will receive a current TCDRS publication entitled “Guide to Member Benefits”. You should become familiar with the contents of this publication, and check with the County Treasurer’s Office when any questions arise. Modifications and revisions are sometimes made by the independent TCDRS Board, and it is your responsibility to stay abreast of any such changes. Periodically, you will receive an updated statement of your TCDRS Retirement Account.

Somervell County also offers an optional 457 deferred compensation plan that allows you to save for retirement with pre-tax dollars (similar to a 401(k) plan for non-public employees).

Pre-tax contributions to a 457 plan have two important advantages over investing after-tax money:

- Your contributions are not reported as taxable income, so you pay less in federal income taxes, and
- Your contributions and earnings are not taxed as long as they stay in the plan.

The plan has a broad range of investment options and you can choose how you want your contributions invested. If you wish to participate in the 457 plan, please contact the County Treasurer for contact information for a 457 plan representative.

Because the plan is designed to help you save for retirement, there are some restrictions on withdrawing your money while you’re an active employee.