

## HUNT COUNTY WELCOME LETTER

Dear New County Employee:

Welcome to employment with Hunt County! You are now a member of a working team dedicated to providing quality service to the residents of Hunt County. We hope you will find your employment with Hunt County both satisfying and rewarding. We look forward to a long and mutually productive working relationship with you.

This employee handbook will provide you with a general knowledge of employment issues, Hunt County policies, your benefits and opportunities, as well as your responsibilities as a Hunt County employee. It is an overview of information contained in the Hunt County Human Resources Policy and Procedures Manual. This handbook does not contain comprehensive detail about employment regulations, benefits, policies, etc. For a complete list of all Hunt County's policies and procedures, please check our website at [www.huntcounty.net](http://www.huntcounty.net) . Each Department Head/Elected Official should also have a Human Resources Policy and Procedures Manual that contains all the policies and procedures for your review as well.

**THE STATEMENTS, DESCRIPTION OR EXPLANATIONS OF PERSONNEL PRACTICES CONTAINED WITHIN THE HANDBOOK ARE MERELY GUIDELINES AND MAY BE CHANGED OR MODIFIED BY THE COMMISSIONER'S COURT AT ANY TIME WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE TO THE EMPLOYEE. FURTHERMORE, THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES REFERRED TO IN THIS HANDBOOK ARE INFORMATIONAL ONLY AND SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED AS A CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT OR A GUARANTEE OF CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT OR BENEFITS BETWEEN HUNT COUNTY AND ANY OF ITS EMPLOYEES.**

Any questions pertaining to the rules and general information contained in this handbook should be directed to the Human Resources Department at (903)408-4103.

This handbook was approved by the Commissioner's Court on October 13, 2008.

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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **COUNTY GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE**

The governing body of the County is the Commissioner's Court. This court is comprised of four Precinct Commissioners and a County Judge. The County Judge is the presiding member of the court and is the Administrative Head and Chief Elected Official of the County. Although the Commissioner's Court conduct the general business of the County and oversee financial matters, other elected officials perform county functions as well. These officials include the District Attorney, County Attorney, County Clerk, District Clerk, County Court-at-Law Judges, Tax Assessor/Collector, County Treasurer, District Judges, Justices of the Peace, Constables, and the Sheriff. The County Auditor and Purchasing Agent, who are appointed by the District Judges, also plays an important role in the County. Other vital and important departments who report to the above mentioned elected officials comprise the rest of Hunt County.

As an employee of Hunt County it is helpful to know the different departments that make up the County as well as the services they provide. A listing of services that are provided by different Hunt County departments and their phone numbers can be found on page 23 as well.

## **AT-WILL EMPLOYMENT**

Employees, who have neither a specific written employment contract nor civil coverage, are considered to be "At-Will Employees". Hunt County has the right to terminate your employment at any time, with or without notice, for any or no reason. The County also retains the right to change any terms, conditions, benefits, or privileges of employment at any time without notice.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYMENT**

It is the policy of Hunt County to recruit, hire, train, promote, discipline, provide compensation, and any other aspect of personnel administration, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, or disability.

It will be the practice of Hunt County to conduct its employee relations in conformity with all Federal and State statutes regarding employment.

Hunt County has a no tolerance policy against discrimination. Therefore, any discrimination complaint needs to be forwarded to the Human Resources Department. All complaints will be investigated and prompt and corrective action will be taken if discrimination has occurred.

If you have any questions concerning Hunt County's employment policies and practices, you should contact your Department Head/Elected Official or the Human Resources Department.

### **YOUR ROLE AS A COUNTY EMPLOYEE**

The purpose of county government is to serve the public. As an employee you have a responsibility to the citizens of Hunt County. The quality of service provided to the public depends on the quality of its employees. It is your responsibility to perform your work in a professional manner that successfully achieves the minimum work requirements set forth in your job description. All employees shall be expected to perform their assigned job duties in a manner that is efficient, economical, and safe. Employees not meeting minimum work standards may be disciplined or terminated by their Department Head/Elected Official.

# GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

## ATTENDANCE

All employees are expected to be at their work station as prescribed by their department in order to provide consistent, dependable service to all citizens of Hunt County.

- **Scheduling** – Each Department Head/Elected Official shall establish a work schedule for his/her department that provides for maximum operational efficiency. It shall be the responsibility of the Department Head to insure that all employees are informed of existing work schedules.
- **Reporting** – Each employee is personally responsible for notifying the supervisor when he/she will be absent or late. Employees who do not call within fifteen (15) minutes of their scheduled time may be considered absent without pay. The supervisor should review all situations for extenuating circumstances.
- **Unexcused Absences** – Unexcused absences will result in disciplinary action.
- **Abandonment of Duties** – An employee who fails to either report for work or call in for three (3) consecutive days shall be deemed to have abandoned his or her duties and will be terminated immediately.

## DELAYED OPENINGS/CLOSINGS

- **Inclement Weather** – In most cases, Hunt County offices will remain open regardless of weather conditions. If offices should close, employees will be granted administrative leave with pay.
- **Notification** – Radio stations KGVV (1400 AM) and KIKT (93.5 FM) will broadcast any delays or County office closings. Employees may also find out about delays and openings on WFAA-TV (Channel 8). Any decisions to close will be made by 6:00 a.m.

Employees who are unable to get to work because of inclement weather should report their absences within 15 minutes after their regularly scheduled time to begin work.

Employees who have timely notified their supervisors of their inability to get to work will have the option of charging the lost time to available leave or unpaid leave.

For additional information regarding attendance, please see Attendance Policy, page 30.

## **PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

All Hunt County employees are responsible for maintaining a neat and appropriate personal appearance at all times. Regardless of work location and presence or absence of public contact, all employees are expected to dress appropriately for their job and are expected to maintain good personal appearance and high standards of personal hygiene. For additional information regarding personal appearance, please see Personal Appearance Policy, page 110.

## **PERSONNEL RECORDS**

It is important to both the employee and the County that individuals' personnel records are kept up to date. It is the responsibility of the employee to notify the Human Resources Department and Treasurer's Office of any changes in name, address, telephone number, or marital status. When a name is changed, the employee must bring a new Social Security card to the Hunt County Human Resources Department and Treasurer's Office with the new name on it. Without a Social Security card, personnel records and pay checks will not be changed. The Social Security Administration requires that the employee name match the contribution name.

Employees should also report any changes in benefit status, including any change of dependents to the Hunt County Treasurer's Office. This must be done within 30 days of the qualifying event.

Hunt County employees may elect to have their home address, telephone number, social security number, and references to family members, closed to public access. If employees wish for this information to be closed to public access, a "Public Access Option Form" must be filled out and signed. This form will be placed with the employee's permanent personnel file. For additional information regarding personnel files, please see Personnel Files Policy, page 6.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Hunt County requires its employees to keep themselves free of influences that might conflict or appear to conflict with the best interest of Hunt County. An employee shall not engage in any employment relationship or activity which would affect his or her job efficiency or his or her responsibility as a Hunt County employee, or which would reduce his or her ability to make objective work-related decisions.

Types of activities, interests, and relationships that typically create or appear to create a conflict of interest are set forth below. This list is intended for guidance purposes only and does not specify every situation that should be disclosed.

It is in conflict with the County's interest:

- For an employee to accept, directly or through any member of his immediate family, any gift of more than nominal value, any loans, services, payments, money, excessive entertainment, vacation, pleasure trips, or promotional favors from any person or entity that is seeking to do business with Hunt County.
- For an employee to perform any services, either as an officer, director, employee, or consultant for another person or entity that is doing or seeking to do business with Hunt County, except in each case with the knowledge and consent of the Commissioner's Court of Hunt County.
- For an employee to purchase or lease goods or equipment on behalf of Hunt County from persons or entities with which he (or employees directly under his supervision) is related to or in which he (or his subordinate) has an interest, or to make any such purchases or leases otherwise than generally on the basis of price, quality and service.
- For an employee to use or reveal, without proper authorization, to a third party any confidential information that might be prejudicial to the interest of Hunt County.
- For an employee, or any member of his immediate family, to own a material financial interest in an entity that is doing or seeking to do business with Hunt County.
- For an employee to be speculating or dealing in materials, equipment, supplies or property purchased by Hunt County.

### **EMPLOYEE OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

No employee shall engage in outside employment, including self employment, where such employment would constitute a conflict of interest or would adversely affect the employee's performance in the County.

Hunt County's insurance does not cover injuries sustained while working second jobs for other employers. Employers are responsible for injuries suffered by their employees doing their jobs. Therefore, Hunt County's worker's compensation insurance excludes coverage for such injuries. For additional information regarding outside employment, please see Outside Employment Policy, page 108.

## **EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

The following restrictions on political activity apply to all Hunt County employees:

- Employees may not actively support or solicit votes or funds for a specific candidate or party while on duty as an employee of Hunt County.
- No employee shall be required to support, contribute to, or campaign for any candidate or party as a requirement for holding such an employee's employment with Hunt County.
- Employees, while not on duty, may be involved in any political activities in which the employee so desires without fear of retaliation.
- County equipment shall not be used for campaign purposes.
- Campaign materials shall not be left or used on Hunt County property (i.e., materials on desk, vehicle left over weekend with campaign advertisement while not on County business).

For additional information regarding political activities, please see Employee Participation in Political Activities Policy, page 109.

## **SOLICITATION**

The solicitation of funds or the solicitation of anything of value for any purpose whatsoever shall not be permitted by any Hunt County employee on the job, except with the expressed approval of the employee's Appointed Official, Department Head, or Elected Official.

## **EMPLOYEE TELEPHONE USAGE**

Telephones are to be used for County business calls. Employees should not use Hunt County's communication services and equipment (including fax machines, wireless telephones, pagers, and portable radios) for personal purposes except in emergencies or when extenuating circumstances warrant it. All employees are expected to keep personal calls to a minimum. Prolonged personal calls and abuse of number of calls may subject the employee to corrective measures. Personal long distance calls must be charged to the employee's home phone number or personal calling card. In the case of an emergency or accidental charge, the employee must promptly reimburse Hunt County by writing a check or paying cash. For additional information regarding telephone usage, please see Telephone Usage Policy, page 111.

## **COUNTY VEHICLE USAGE**

Hunt County does not furnish vehicles for personal use and no County vehicle shall be taken home by an employee without the approval of the Department Head or Elected Official. At no time will a County vehicle be taken home by an employee who lives outside the geographical boundaries of Hunt County. For additional information regarding vehicle use, please see Vehicle Use Policy, page 112.

## **USE OF COUNTY PROPERTY/EQUIPMENT**

County employees shall not take property or equipment which belongs to Hunt County for the purposes of said property or equipment for capital gain or personal use. Violation of this policy may lead to disciplinary action. For additional information regarding use of county property, please see Use of Hunt County Property/Equipment Policy, page 122.

## **SMOKING POLICY**

In order to protect its employees, guests, and citizens, Hunt County is a smoke free workplace. Smoking is prohibited in all Hunt County facilities except in a few designated areas which have been approved by the Commissioner's Court. For additional information regarding smoking policy, please see Smoking Policy, page 123.

## **DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY FOR EMPLOYEES**

Hunt County has an interest in and concern for the safety and health of its employees. The County prohibits the use of controlled substances or alcohol on county facilities and/or arriving for work impaired by or under the influence of a controlled substance or alcohol. The purpose of the drug and alcohol testing is to promote a Drug-Free Environment and to protect the employee who might be impaired by the use of a controlled substance, his or her fellow employees, and the general public from harm or injury.

Drug testing will be conducted on all employees prior to employment and after all on the job accidents. Reasonable suspicion testing will be administered to employees when the supervisor has reason to believe the employee has violated the alcohol or controlled substances prohibitions. All Hunt County employees who are required to have a commercial drivers license (CDL) will be required to take random alcohol and drug tests. Random testing will be unannounced and spread throughout the year. CDL employees who test positive for controlled substances shall be subject to immediate termination of employment. In addition, any employee who refuses to submit to a drug and/or alcohol analysis upon request shall be considered insubordinate and shall be terminated. For additional information on drug and alcohol policy, please see Drug and Alcohol Policy, page 125.

## **SAFETY**

Hunt County Commissioner's Court holds a high regard for the safety, welfare, and health of Hunt County employees. They further believe that most accidents can be prevented. Each employee is responsible for becoming familiar with the safety rules and regulations applicable to his or her job and complying with them. These rules are explained in the Hunt County Safety Policy, page 141.

If an employee is injured on the job, that employee or a co-worker should notify the supervisor immediately, as well as the Hunt County Human Resources Department. For



additional information regarding workers compensation, please see Workers Compensation Policy, page 85.

### **ANTI-HARASSMENT**

Harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age or disability is discrimination and, as such, is a violation of federal law. Harassment of any individual in the workplace is a violation of Hunt County Policy, which will not be tolerated. Violations of this policy shall result in disciplinary action including, where appropriate, discharge. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, or
- Submission or rejection of conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Employees may report complaints based on harassment, directly to their supervisor, Department Head, Elected Official, or the Human Resources Department. Sheriff's department employees may also choose to report their complaint with the Internal Affairs Division of the Sheriff's Department. All employees should report such complaints as soon as possible after the incident precipitating the complaint. For investigation procedures and more information regarding sexual harassment, please see Anti-harassment Policy, page 9.

### **EMPLOYEE DISCIPLINE**

It is the policy of Hunt County that Department Heads, Elected Officials, and supervisors have the responsibility and authority to instruct, correct, and discipline any employee who does not act in accordance with established rules and regulations or provides unsatisfactory work performance.

### **NEPOTISM**

Hunt County has adopted a nepotism policy in order to promote good business practices. A county employee shall not be hired, promoted, demoted, or transferred in a manner that would violate state laws or local rules prohibiting nepotism. Under this policy, Elected Officials and Department Heads are prohibited from hiring and promoting relatives. This policy applies to all departments that report to the Commissioner's Court.

Two individuals related by marriage (affinity) to the second degree or by blood (consanguinity) to the third degree cannot work within the same chain of supervisory command. The “chain of supervisory command” refers to those employees in the line of supervision and/or management from the division head down through the organization.

If a relationship is created by marriage, and the two both work in the same chain of command, one of the related employees must transfer to another position with Hunt County or resign within 90 days. If one of the related employees does not transfer within the 90 days, then the employee with lesser seniority will be terminated. Termination of a marriage by divorce or death of a spouse may terminate relationships by affinity created by that marriage.

For additional information regarding nepotism, please see Nepotism Policy, page 25.

# **BENEFITS**

## **INSURANCE (HEALTH, DENTAL, & VISION)**

Hunt County offers health and dental insurance for full-time employees. Coverage for dependents is also available. Premiums can be paid through payroll deduction. Premiums that are paid through payroll deduction may be part of an approved Section 125 Premium Only Plan and may be withheld prior to income tax computation. Elections for dependent coverage must be made during the annual enrollment period and become effective from October 1 through September 30. Those elections cannot be changed in the middle of a year unless there is a change in family status and notification is made within 30 days of the status change.

Please call the Treasurer's Office for any questions concerning insurance or for further details or see Benefits, page 75.

## **LIFE INSURANCE**

Hunt County provides Basic Group Term Life Insurance. Supplemental Life Insurance is available for eligible employees and premiums will be payroll deducted.

For further details or questions regarding life insurance, please contact the Hunt County Treasurer's Office or see Benefits, page 75.

## **DEFERRED COMPENSATION**

Deferred compensation is a voluntary tax-favored program that allows public employees to contribute a portion of their salaries into a supplemental retirement account. This program is authorized under the Internal Revenue Code 457b and allows income tax to be deferred on employees' contributions until the funds are withdrawn.

For additional information regarding the deferred compensation program and other investment opportunities, please contact the Hunt County Treasurer's Office.

## **HOLIDAYS**

The following days are observed as Hunt County legal holidays:

New Years Day	Labor Day
Martin Luther King's Birthday	Veteran's Day
Good Friday	Thanksgiving Day
Memorial Day	Day after Thanksgiving
Independence Day	Christmas Eve
	Christmas Day

When a holiday falls on Saturday, the preceding Friday will be observed. When a holiday falls on Sunday, the following Monday will be observed. Holidays falling during a vacation shall be processed as holidays and not charged to vacation.

An employee must work the day before and the first scheduled day after the holiday to be eligible for holiday pay, unless the absence is approved by the Department Head/Elected Official.

For additional information regarding holidays, please see Holidays, page 37.

## **RETIREMENT**

Full and part-time employees are required to contribute 7% of their gross earning to the Texas County and District Retirement System. This amount is payroll deducted and tax-deferred. Hunt County matches the employee's contribution.

Employees are vested after eight (8) years of service and are eligible for the vested portion only upon retirement. Employees are eligible to retire after completing 30 years of service, at age sixty (60) with as many as eight (8) years of service, or at any age if the sum of their age and years of service is seventy five (75).

Beneficiaries are designated at the time of employment. Employees may review and update their beneficiary designation by completing a new form in the Treasurer's Office.

Employees who resign and are not eligible for retirement benefits may withdraw their contributions. To apply for a withdrawal, the employee must complete a "Withdrawal Application or apply for the Direct Rollover option in the County Treasurer's Office.

# **EMPLOYEE SERVICES**

## **DIRECT DEPOSIT**

Direct Deposit is a service that allows employees to have their check deposited into their checking or savings account automatically on payday. Direct deposit is available for banks that accept electronic transfers. For more information about direct deposit and how to sign up for it, contact the Hunt County Treasurer's Office.

## **INTERNET**

The Internet provides Hunt County with significant access and distribution of information to individuals outside of Hunt County. The use of the Internet and online services is solely for the support of County tasks. Employees have no right to privacy with regard to Internet use. Management has the ability and right to view employees' usage patterns and take action to assure that County Internet resources are devoted to maintaining the highest levels of productivity. Use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right. The privilege may be revoked at any time and for any reason. Abuse of the privilege may result in appropriate disciplinary action.

The Hunt County internet website address is: [www.huntcounty.net](http://www.huntcounty.net). The Hunt County web site contains web pages for each department, job openings, and much more.

## **E-MAIL**

The Hunt County e-mail system is provided to County employees for business communication among employees and other business associates for messages or memoranda. The e-mail system is not intended for the primary transmission of personal e-mails. All data and other electronic messages within this system are the property of Hunt County, and therefore the taxpayers of Hunt County.

Employees should be aware that when sending an e-mail message of a personal nature, there is always the danger of the employee's words being interpreted as official agency policy or opinion. Therefore, when an employee sends a personal e-mail, especially if the content of the e-mail could be interpreted as an official agency statement, the employee should use the following disclaimer at the end of the message:

*"This e-mail contains the thoughts and opinions of (employee name) and does not represent official Hunt County policy."*

## SECURITY

The Department of Information Services uses the latest technology and techniques to maintain the highest level of security possible, but employees have a responsibility to help also. Every employee plays a critical role in keeping Hunt County's computer system secure. When your log on to your computer, send an e-mail, share a file, you can help or hurt network security.

Viruses are most commonly spread through e-mail attachments. All employees should also be careful to prevent the spread of computer viruses via e-mail and files. Open only e-mail attachments from individuals that you know.

Hunt County employees should take steps to ensure that their computer is secure when they leave their work station. Computers can be secured with screen saver passwords or by logging out of the network and all systems. Passwords to your computer should always remain confidential, do not share your password with anyone. If your password is easy to remember it would probably be easy for someone else to guess. A few guidelines to follow are:

Do:

- Choose a password that is at least 8 characters long
- Use a combination of uppercase and lowercase letters
- Contain at least one number or special character (i.e.: 1, 5, \$, &)

Do Not:

- Use a word from the dictionary
- Use a short or common words (i.e.: your dog's name, favorite color)
- Write your password down on a post-it and place it on your desk or computer monitor.

If you forget your password, call the Information Systems Department. If you receive a suspicious e-mail, call the Information Systems Department for instructions on how to proceed. If an infected file is critical, the Information Systems Department will attempt to rescue the data. Success is not guaranteed.

# **CLASSIFICATION/COMPENSATION**

## **CLASSIFICATION OF POSITIONS**

### **Exempt Employee**

Employees who meet the criteria established by the Fair Labor Standards Act which exempts certain Managerial, Professional, or Administrative employees from payment of overtime.

### **Non-Exempt Employee**

Employees who must, by provision of the Fair Labor Standards Act, be compensated for hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours per week and law enforcement employees who work in excess of eighty-six (86) hours during a fourteen (14) day work period.

### **Hourly Employee**

An employee who works twenty-five (25) or less hours per week on a regular basis. Hourly employees are not eligible for benefits, except as required by law or special funding agreement.

### **Temporary Employee**

An individual hired by the county to perform a job for a limited period of time, generally not to exceed six (6) months. Temporary employees may work full-time or part-time, and are not eligible for benefits.

### **Seasonal Employee**

An individual hired by the county to perform a job during summer break or holidays. Seasonal employees are not eligible for benefits.

### **Inactive Employee**

An employee who is on an Approved Leave of Absence without Pay and who shall not accrue any benefits. (service, vacation, sick, etc.)

## **JOB EVALUATION**

Job evaluation is the process of determining the relative worth of all jobs. Hunt County uses a point factor system to evaluate jobs, and the Human Resources Department assigns a pay grade to the job accordingly. Job descriptions are written for all positions covered under the job evaluation plan prior to their being rated and classified by the Human Resources Department.

## **EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE APPRIASALS**

Hunt County encourages all Department Heads/Elected Officials to conduct a formal performance appraisal for each employee who has been continuously employed by Hunt County for at least six (6) months. Employees shall be evaluated by supervisors who have knowledge of the employee's work. County employees are evaluated on the basis of performance of job duties.

## **OVERTIME PAY/COMPENSATION**

### **Exempt Employees**

The Fair Labor Standards act does not require overtime payment to exempt employees.

### **Non-Exempt Employees**

Non-exempt employees shall be compensated one and a half (1 ½) basis, for all overtime worked. Overtime compensation may be in the form of monetary payment or compensatory time.

Law Enforcement employees: All hours worked up to eighty (80) hours during a fourteen (14) day work period shall be compensated at a set amount. Hours worked from eighty-one (81) through eighty-six (86) during the fourteen (14) day period shall be compensated on a straight time basis. Hours worked in excess of eighty-six (86) hours shall be compensated at one and one- half (1 ½) basis.

For additional information regarding overtime, please see Overtime, page 34.

## **LONGEVITY PAY**

All Hunt County employees shall be eligible for longevity pay upon completion of five (5) years of continuous service. All new hires will be assigned a Longevity Date that is the same as their hire date. Employees shall receive longevity pay each pay period.

For further information, please see Longevity Pay, page 82.

## **PAY PERIODS**

Hunt County operates on a bi-weekly payroll system and paychecks are issued twenty-six (26) times a year. Payday is every other Friday unless a payday falls on a holiday, in which case, the employee will be paid the day before the holiday.



# LEAVE AND ABSENCE ISSUES

## VACATION

All full-time Hunt County employees, after having completed six (6) months of continuous service, shall be eligible to take up to 40 hours of accrued vacation.

Vacation time for full-time employees accrues as follows:

Years of Service	Vacation Hours	# of Days	Per Pay Period Accrual
1 -9 years	80	10	3.08
10 + years	120	15	4.62

Part-time employees are not eligible for vacation. For further information on vacation, please see Vacation Policy, page 38.

## SICK LEAVE

All full-time employees will earn sick leave. Full-time employees will accrue sick time at a rate of 4.62 hours per pay period. Sick leave accruals may not exceed sixty (60) days or four hundred eighty (480) hours.

Sick leave will not be paid to any terminating/resigning employee.

For further information, please see Sick Leave Policy, page 40.

## SICK BANK LEAVE

Hunt County provides a sick leave bank that allows employees to contribute accumulated sick leave hours. An employee must contribute twenty four (24) hours the first year to the pool. Then eight (8) hours each year after.

Employees who suffer a catastrophic illness or injury may draw time from the pool when all their own available leave has been exhausted. Employees are only eligible to join the Sick Leave Bank if they have completed twelve (12) or more months of continuous service with Hunt County.

For further information, please see Sick Leave Bank, page 42.

## **FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE**

Hunt County provides Family and Medical Leave to all eligible employees as required by the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. To be eligible, an employee must be employed by Hunt County for at least twelve (12) months and must have worked at least twelve hundred fifty (1250) hours during the last twelve (12) months. An eligible employee is entitled to a total of twelve (12) weeks of leave during any twelve (12) month period to be measured backward from the date the leave is first used. While on Family and Medical Leave, all employees will be required to use all appropriate paid leave, before going into an unpaid status. Family and Medical Leave is not additional leave. It consists of paid time, if any, and unpaid leave together, totaling twelve (12) weeks. Compensatory time, if available, can be used to supplement pay during this leave if the employee chooses to do so. Leave accruals will discontinue once paid leave is exhausted.

Reasons for Family and Medical Leave include the following:

- Because of the birth of a son or daughter of the employee and in order to care for such son or daughter because of the placement of a son or a daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care in the anticipation of adoption.
- In order to care for the spouse, son or daughter, or parent, of the employee, if such spouse, son or daughter, or parent, has a serious health condition.
- Because of a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of the position of such employee, including intermittent leave for prenatal appointments, dialysis, chemotherapy, or other similar situations.
- A “qualifying exigency” arising out of a covered family member’s active duty or call to active duty in the Armed Forces in support of a contingency plan.
- To care for a covered family member who has incurred an injury or illness in the line of duty while on active duty in the Armed Forces provided that such injury or illness may render the family member medically unfit to perform duties of the member’s office, grade, rank, or rating.

Employees who are absent from work for a Family and Medical Leave related reason must complete a “Family and Medical Leave Request Form” as well as a “Certification of Physician Form.” These forms can be obtained from the Hunt County Human Resources Department, or see Family and Medical Leave Policy, page 48.

## **DEATH IN THE IMMEDIATE FAMILY**

Hunt County allows time off in the event that there is a death in the immediate family. Full-time employees may be granted up to three (3) days or twenty four (24) hours annually of paid leave for a funeral or for attending to details concerning the death of a member of the employee’s immediate family. Notification of the leave must be given to

the supervisor at least two (2) hours in advance of the intending absence. For further information, please see Death in the Immediate Family, page 64.

### **JURY DUTY**

Employees are excused from work for jury duty and to serve as witnesses under subpoenas. Prior to the absence, the employee should give his/her supervisor a copy of the notice requiring the service. When employees are released from jury duty or witness service before the end of a work day, they are required to return to work. Employees who are called to serve on state, county, or city juries will be paid their regular hourly rate. For further information, please see Jury Duty, page 70.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE ABSENCE**

Regular employees may be granted administrative absence with pay when deemed necessary in order to vote in an official election. Employees wishing to vote in an official election may be granted administrative absence in order to vote, an employee must notify his/her Department Head or Elected Official in advance of the election of his/her intention to vote.

For further information, please see Administrative Absence, page 63.

### **MILITARY LEAVE**

Regular and part-time employees who are required to participate in military duty will be allowed time off for military duty pursuant to United States Code, Title 38, Chapter 43.

For further information, please see Military Leave, page 65.

### **WORKERS' COMPENSATION/ON-THE-JOB INJURIES**

Employees who are injured on the job may be entitled to receive Workers' Compensation benefits. The State of Texas requires prompt and accurate reporting of on-the-job injuries and work related illnesses. All on-the-job injuries, regardless of the severity, must be reported immediately to the supervisor. Failure to report an injury may result in delay or denial of benefits.

Coverage under the Act does not imply in instances where the injury is self-inflicted, or if the employee is intoxicated and causes the injury. Hunt County does not cover injuries sustained while working second jobs for other employers.

#### **Procedures for Injury Reporting**

1. The injured employee must notify the supervisor immediately.
2. The supervisor must then complete the "First Report of Injury" and forward it to the Human Resources Department within twenty four (24) hours.

3. The injured employee should seek medical attention if needed. If the injured employee is unable to seek medical attention, the supervisor or a co-worker should seek medical attention for the employee.
4. If the employee receives services at a hospital or physicians office, the employee should notify the physician or hospital that the injury is work related. If medication is required, the employee should also notify the pharmacist that the medication is required because of a job related injury.

### **Time Lost From Work**

1. Notify the Human Resources Department the first day the employee misses work and furnish the Human Resources Department a copy of the physician's order removing the employee from work.
2. Notify the Human Resources Department the first day the employee returns to work and furnish the Human Resources Department a copy of the physician's release to return to work.

**Payments to Health Care Providers** – If medical attention is required, employees should not pay for the services. They should tell the providers to call the Hunt County Human Resources Department at (903) 408-4103 to verify coverage and get instructions for filing claims. The same procedure should be used when purchasing prescriptions related to an on-the-job injury.

**Workers' Compensation Pay** – Workers' Compensation insurance provides temporary income benefits to employees who are ordered off work because of job related duties if it exceeds seven (7) days. Sick leave may be used the first seven (7) days off. Law Enforcement personnel have continuation of pay. For further information, please see Worker's Compensation policy, page 85.

### **MAXIMUM TIME ALLOWED FOR COMBINED LEAVES**

Hunt County limits the total amount of time allowed for any combinations of leave, including paid and unpaid, to a maximum of six (6) months. Employees who are not able to return to work at the end of six (6) months are subject to termination in accordance with Non-Disciplinary Separation, page 98.

# **CAREER CHANGES**

## **DEMOTION**

A demotion is a move to a job that is of a lower pay grade than the prior job. A demotion may be voluntary, the result of disciplinary action, the result of restructuring or reclassification, or as a result of a reduction in workforce.

## **PROMOTION**

A promotion occurs when the new job is of a higher pay grade than the prior job. Promotional increases must be within budgetary constraints.

## **LATERAL TRANSFER**

If an employee transfers to a job in the same pay grade, the salary will remain the same if within budgetary constraints of the hiring department.

## **SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT**

Information on continued health insurance coverage after separation from county service should be directed to the Hunt County Treasurer's Office.

### **The most common conditions under which employment is separated are:**

#### **A. RESIGNATION**

The term "RESIGNATION" shall be used to refer to any situation in which an employee voluntarily leaves employment with the County. When an employee intends to resign, the employee should provide his/her Department Head/Elected Official at least two (2) weeks prior to the last scheduled work date.

#### **B. TERMINATION/DISCHARGE**

An employee may be terminated by Hunt County for a variety of reasons including:

- Employee Discipline – An employee may be terminated as a result of disciplinary action.
- Non-Disciplinary Separation – An employee may be terminated for a reduction in work force because of changes in duties, reorganization, or for lack of work or availability of funds. An employee may also be separated/terminated for incapacity for medical reasons when the employee is unable to return to work after all leave time under the Family Medical Leave Act is exhausted or when the employee cannot perform the

essential functions of his/her job, with or without reasonable accommodations.

### **C. RETIREMENT**

Employees who have fulfilled the age and years of service requirement may choose to retire from Hunt County. Employees are eligible to retire after completing 30 years of service, at age sixty (60) with as may as eight (8) years of service, or at any age if the sum of their age and service is seventy five (75). Employees must complete a retirement application form and turn it in to the Treasurer's Office at least 30 – 60 days prior to their desired retirement date. Any questions regarding the procedures for retirement need to be directed to the Hunt County Treasurer's Office.

## SERVICES YOU MAY ACCESS FROM HUNT COUNTY DEPARTMENTS

<b>Department</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>Services Provided</b>
County Extension	903-455-9885	Agriculture, Horticulture, Family Consumer Science, & 4H Information
County Clerk	903-408-4130	Marriage license, passports, birth certificates, deed records and real estate legal instruments, will of a deceased person, misdemeanors.
District Clerk	903-408-4172	Jury information, adoption records, child support, divorces, felony.
District Attorney	903-408-4180	Criminal misconduct
Human Resources	903-408-4103	Applications for employment, safety, Workers Compensation Claims
Tax Assessor/Collector	903-408-4000	Motor vehicle registration & license plates, property taxes
Sheriff's Department	903-453-6800	Jail information/jail visits, bonding information, DARE, background checks
Health Department	903-408-4140	Vaccinations, WIC, water sample tests, blood tests
Elections Administration	903-454-5467	Voter registration certificate or early voting
Justice of the Peace	JP 1, PI 1-903-453-6922 JP 1, PI 2-903-453-6930 JP 2-903-886-6726 JP 3-903-496-7974 JP 4-903-356-2904	Traffic ticket fines issued by the Department of Public Safety, performs marriage ceremonies

## EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I have received a copy of the Hunt County Employee Handbook and agree to read and follow it during my duration of employment with Hunt County.

I understand that the contents of the handbook are presented as an information source only and that the handbook is not intended to provide any assurance of continued employment and should in no way be construed as an express or implied employment contract.

I also understand that my employment with Hunt County is “at-will” and Hunt County can terminated my employment for any or no reason, with or without cause, and with or without prior notice.

I further understand that the Commissioner’s Court of Hunt County reserves the right to modify, revoke, suspend, terminate, or change the policies and other information in the handbook, in whole or in part, at any time, with or without prior notice. Therefore, any future changes made will supersede what is written in this handbook.

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Employee’s Signature

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Date

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Employee’s Printed Name