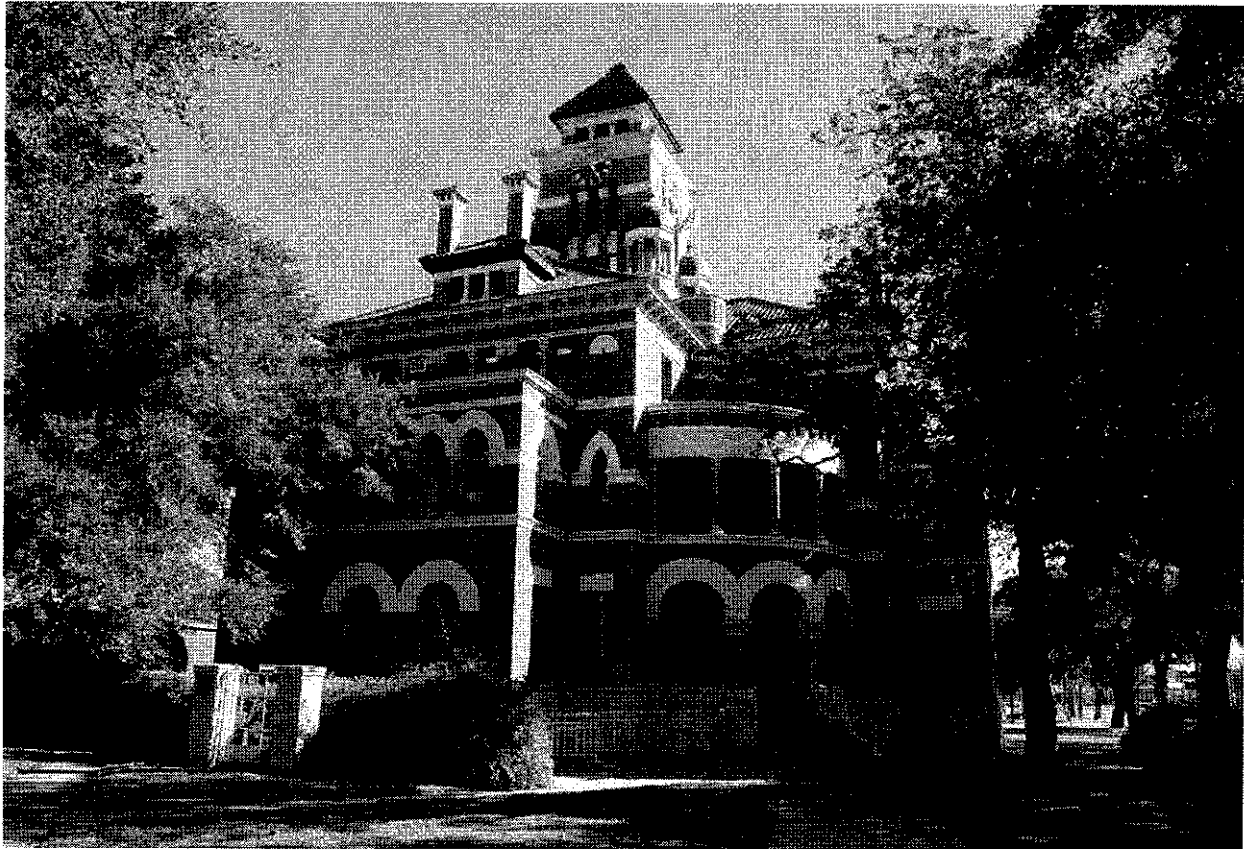


GONZALES COUNTY

PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL

AND PROCEDURES



GONZALES COUNTY
PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL AND PROCEDURES

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EMPLOYEE PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL AND PROCEDURES ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I understand the Gonzales County Personnel Policy Manual and Procedures has been emailed to me, may be accessed on www.co.gonzales.tx.us and I may obtain a hard copy of the manual from Human Resources. I understand Gonzales County Personnel Policy Manual and Procedures outlines my benefits and obligations as a County employee. I understand that I am responsible for reading and familiarizing myself with the information in the manual and understand that it contains general personnel policies of the County. If I need clarification on any of the information in the manual, I will contact my immediate supervisor.

I further understand that the Gonzales County Personnel Policy Manual and Procedures is not a contract of employment. I understand that I am an at-will employee and that my employment may be terminated by either myself or the County, at any time, with or without cause, and with or without notice.

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

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

Printed Name of Employee

Signature of Employee

Date Signed

**COUNTY OF GONZALES
COMMISSIONERS COURT ORDER**

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

WHEREAS the Gonzales County Commissioners Court wish to adequately communicate to employees the policies and procedures of the County:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Gonzales County Commissioners Court hereby approves, and adopt, the GONZALES COUNTY EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK.

ADOPTED THIS 29th DAY OF September, 2025

Daniel C. Davis
County Judge

Art Taylor
Commissioner Pct. 1

Rebecca R. Ruppert
Commissioner Pct. 2

Roy L. Lott
Commissioner Pct. 3

Carla B. Blevins
Commissioner Pct. 4

Witnessed and Attested By:

Jana Ackerman
County Clerk



RESOLUTION FOR GONZALES COUNTY

I the undersigned have read the Gonzales County Employee Handbook that the Gonzales County Commissioner's Court has adopted. As an ELECTED OFFICIAL of Gonzales County, I endorse and approve the Employee Handbook. I approve the document as it reflects my commitment to Gonzales County employees, and it reflects my commitment to conform to appropriate state and federal laws.

I agree to be bound by the terms and conditions of the Gonzales County Employee Handbook, as witnessed by my signatures below.

Patrick C. Davis

Printed Name of Elected Official

Patrick C. Davis

Signature of Elected Official

County Judge

Office of Elected Official

9-29-25

Date Signed

Gonzales County Employee Handbook

Welcome to Gonzales County!

We are excited to have you as an employee of Gonzales County. You were hired because the elected official, appointed official or department head believes you can contribute to the success of Gonzales County, and share our commitment to serving the public and our constituents with excellence.

Gonzales County is committed to providing excellent service to the public in all our county offices. As part of the team, we hope you will discover that the pursuit of excellence is a rewarding aspect of your career here.

This employee handbook contains some key policies, benefits, and expectations of Gonzales County, and other information you will need. Each elected or appointed official may have detailed policy and procedures for their office. Should a specific Department policy conflict with a policy within this handbook, the County Employee handbook policy shall prevail.

If any policy, benefit, expectation within this employee handbook is held invalid or unenforceable then such provision shall be struck from the handbook and the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

Your job is essential to fulfilling our mission of serving our county constituents every day and to meet or exceed their expectations. We achieve this through dedicated hard work and commitment from every Gonzales County employee. You should use this handbook as a ready reference as you pursue your career with Gonzales County. Please consult with your elected official, appointed official or department head regarding questions you may have concerned this employee handbook.

Welcome aboard!

Sincerely,



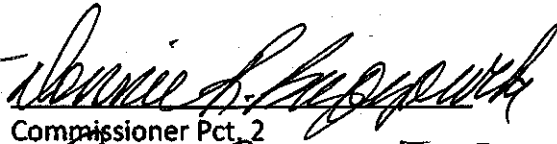
County Judge



Commissioner Pct. 1



Commissioner Pct. 3



Commissioner Pct. 2



Commissioner Pct. 4

SECTION 1: GENERAL POLICIES

A. COUNTY EMPLOYMENT

1A-1 EMPLOYMENT AT-WILL

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

Gonzales County shall have the right to terminate the employment of any employee for any legal reason, or no reason, at any time either with or without notice.

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

1A-2 EMPLOYEE STATUS POLICY

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

Regular Full Time: A full-time employee shall be any employee in a position who has a normal work schedule of forty (40) hours per week. Full time employees are eligible for county health insurance and retirement benefits. Other county policies will dictate eligibility for other benefits. Employees may be non-exempt, hourly employees or exempt employees. Non-exempt employees are eligible for overtime compensation. Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime compensation. Gonzales County makes exempt status determination based on the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Modified Full time: A modified full-time employee shall be any employee in a position who has a normal work schedule of less than forty (40) hours per week, but more than thirty (30) hours per week. Modified full time employees are eligible for county health insurance and retirement benefits. Other county policies will dictate eligibility for other benefits.

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

Temporary Seasonal: A seasonal employee shall be any employee who is hired into a position that lasts six (6) or less months and begins at approximately the same time each year. Examples may include, but are not limited to, lifeguards, summer mowers, and election workers. The

county must define and document the season that the employee is being hired for. Seasonal employees can be either part time or full time, and they may qualify for health insurance through the county under the Affordable Care Act depending on the number of hours worked per week, and the length of employment. Temporary seasonal employees are not eligible for retirement benefits under TCDRS. Other county policies will dictate eligibility for other benefits.

Regular Variable Hour: A variable hour employee shall be any employee for whom the county cannot determine the average number of hours that the employee will work each week – hours are variable or indeterminate at the time of the employee’s start date. If the employee works an average of thirty (30) or more hours a week in the measurement period, the employee will be eligible for health insurance through the county under the Affordable Care Act. If an employee’s schedule becomes regular, then the employee shall be reclassified as full or part time depending on the hours worked. Regular variable hour employees are eligible for retirement benefits under TCDRS. Other county policies will dictate eligibility for other benefits.

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

1A-3 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

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

1A-4 AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT AMENDMENTS ACT

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

It is Gonzales County’s policy to reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with disabilities unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the county. In accordance with

the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended (ADAAA), reasonable accommodations may be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities when such accommodations are necessary to enable them to perform the essential functions of their jobs, or to enjoy the equal benefits and privileges of employment. This policy applies to all applicants for employment, and all employees. If you require accommodation, please contact your elected official, appointed official, or department head. Reasonable accommodation shall be determined through an interactive process of consultation.

1A-5 PERSONNEL FILES

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

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

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

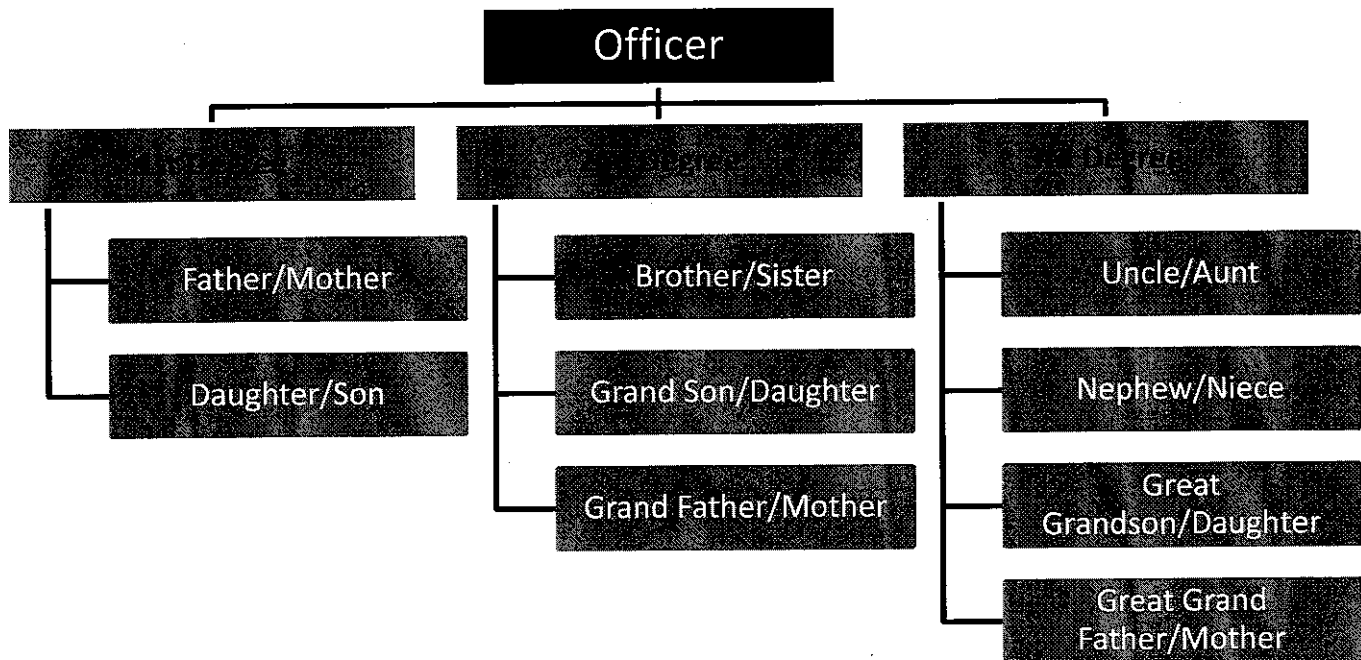
1A-6 NEPOTISM

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

A degree of relationship is determined under Texas Government Code Chapter 573. (See the charts that follow.)

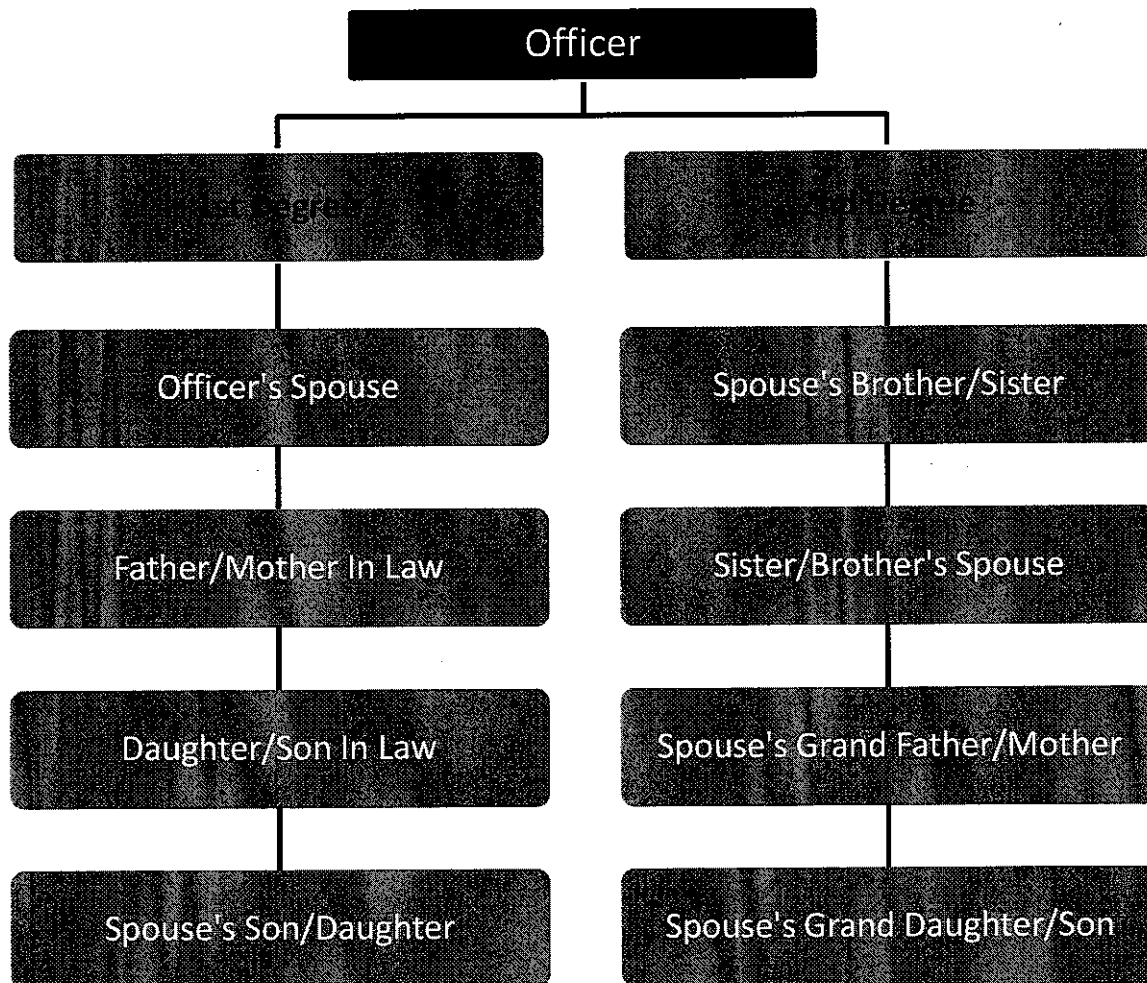
CONSANGUINITY KINSHIP CHART

(Relationship by Blood)



AFFINITY KINSHIP CHART

(Relationship by Marriage)



B. WORK RULES AND EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

1B-1 ATTENDANCE

As a Gonzales County employee, you are expected to be punctual and demonstrate consistent attendance.

Each employee shall report to work on each day they are scheduled to work and at the starting time set by their supervisor unless prior approval for absence is given by the supervisor or the employee is unable to report for work because of circumstances beyond the control of the employee. If an employee is unable to be at work at their normal reporting time, they shall be responsible for notifying their supervisor at least 2 hour(s) prior to the scheduled start of their shift or as soon as it is reasonably practicable in the case of an emergency.

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

Each supervisor is responsible for determining if an unscheduled absence or tardiness is to be classified as excused or unexcused, based on the circumstances causing the absence or tardiness. Frequent unexcused absences or tardiness, as determined by your immediate supervisor, may make an employee subject to disciplinary measures, up to and including termination of employment.

An employee who does not report for work for three (3) consecutive scheduled workdays, and who fails to notify their supervisor, shall be considered to have resigned their position by abandonment.

1B-2 DRESS CODE

Gonzales County expects all employees to be well groomed, clean, and neat always. Each official or department head will determine the type of attire that is acceptable. Employees are required to always act in a professional manner and extend the highest courtesy to co-workers and to the public being served. A cheerful and positive attitude is essential to our commitment to customer service.

1B-3 TOBACCO/SMOKE FREE WORKPLACE

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

1B-4 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Employees of Gonzales County shall not engage in any employment, relationship, or activity which could be viewed as a conflict of interest because of the potential or appearance of affecting the employee's job efficiency, or which would reduce their ability to make objective decisions regarding their work and responsibility as a Gonzales County employee.

Employees involved in conflict-of-interest situations shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination and these actions may have criminal consequences for employees.

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

- 1) Soliciting, accepting, or agreeing to accept a financial benefit, gift, or favor, other than from the County, that might reasonably tend to influence the employee's performance of duties for the County or that the employee knows or should know is offered with the intent to influence the employee's performance.
- 2) Accepting employment, compensation, gifts, or favors that might reasonably tend to induce the employee to disclose confidential information acquired in the performance of official duties.
- 3) Accepting outside employment, compensation, gifts, or favors that might reasonably tend to impair independence of judgment in performance of duties for the County.
- 4) Making any personal investment that might reasonably be expected to create a substantial conflict between the employee's private interest and their duties for the County; or
- 5) Soliciting, accepting, or agreeing to accept a financial benefit from another person in exchange for having performed duties as a county employee in favor of that person.

1B-5 HARASSMENT

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

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

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

Every reported complaint will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. While all claims of harassment shall be handled with discretion, there can be no complete assurance of full confidentiality. The official or department head to which a claim has been reported shall be responsible for seeing that prompt action is taken to investigate the claim.

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

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

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

1B-6 SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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

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

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

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

Every reported complaint will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. The official or department head to which a claim has been reported shall be responsible for seeing that prompt action is taken to investigate the claim.

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

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

- a) When practical, confront the harasser and ask them to stop the unwanted behavior.
- b) Record the time, place, and specifics of each incident, including any witnesses.
- c) Report continuing sexual harassment to the Human Resource Department, Elected Official, Appointed Official, or Department Head who is responsible for your department or to the County Judge or the County Attorney.
- d) If a thorough investigation reveals that unlawful sexual harassment has occurred, Gonzales County will take effective remedial action in accordance with the circumstances, up to and including termination.

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

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

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

1B-7 POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Employees of Gonzales County are encouraged to vote and, if desired, enter and be active in politics. Employees of Gonzales County shall have the right to support candidates of their choice and to engage in political activity during their personal time.

County employees shall not: 1) Use their official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the result of any election or nomination for office; 2) Directly or indirectly coerce, attempt to coerce, command, or advise another person to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value to a party, committee, organization, agency, or person for a political reason; 3) Use any equipment, property or material owned by the County for political activity or engage in political activity while on duty for the County; or 4) Allow posting of any political signage on County property.

It is the policy of the County to foster government efficiency and to ensure that employees can perform their jobs without being pressured to support specific County or other political candidates.

1B-8 OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Gonzales County employees are expected to give their full and undivided attention to their job duties. They should not use Gonzales County facilities or equipment or their association with Gonzales County to carry on a private business or profession. Unless express approval is obtained in advance and in writing from their immediate supervisor, county employees should not engage

in a profit-making business nor become involved with a non-profit organization outside of their employment with Gonzales County that interferes with the employee's assigned duties with Gonzales County.

A Gonzales County employee may not file a workers' compensation claim against the County for benefits related to the injury, while in the course of employment with another employer.

A Gonzales County employee accepting other employment while still being employed by the County shall notify the supervisor before beginning such work.

1B-9 BREAKS

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

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

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

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

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

1B-10 GRIEVANCES

Any employee having a grievance related to their job should discuss the grievance with their immediate supervisor.

If the discussion with the immediate supervisor does not resolve the grievance, and, if the immediate supervisor is not the elected or appointed official with final responsibility for the employee's department, the employee shall have the right to discuss the grievance with that official.

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

GONZALES COUNTY POLICY ON GRIEVANCES AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

RIGHT OF GRIEVANCE

Employees of Gonzales County who feel they have been improperly or unfairly treated in their job or in their relationship with the County shall have the right to file a grievance. Actions or results which occur, and which are beyond the control of the County shall not be considered grounds for grievance.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Grievances shall be handled in accordance with the grievance procedures set out herein.

STOPPING THE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Only the employee who has filed the grievance shall be able to stop the grievance procedure either by action or inaction. The grievance procedure shall be stopped if:

- a) The employee indicates he/she is satisfied with the action to resolve the grievance at any level of the grievance procedure.
- b) The employee, for any reason, indicates that he/she no longer wishes to continue the grievance procedure; or
- c) The employee fails to take action to continue with the next step of the procedure within three working days of completion of the prior step.

TIMELY FILING

Grievances must be filed within five (5) calendar days of the occurrence of the incident causing the grievance.

ADVERSE ACTION

No adverse action shall be taken against any employee for reasons of their exercise of the right to file a grievance.

COMBINED STEP

If the employee's immediate supervisor is the Department Head, Step B of the grievance procedure may be eliminated, and the employee may go immediately to Step C from Step A.

Step A: Employee informally discusses grievance with their supervisor. The supervisor decides what action, if any, will be taken regarding the grievance.

If Step A does not result in a resolution of the grievance, the employee may proceed to Step B, which is the first step of the formal grievance procedure, within three working days after the informal discussion with their supervisor.

Step B: The employee prepares a written statement giving the details of the grievance and stating the specific remedial action requested. Employee delivers grievance statement to supervisor. The supervisor reviews the facts of the grievance, decides as to what action, if any, is to be taken to resolve the grievance and communicates the decision to the employee within five working days after having received the grievance.

If the employee is not satisfied with the decision in Step B, if the supervisor fails to respond within five working days, or if Step B is eliminated as set out in paragraph above, the employee may take the grievance to Step C within three working days.

Step C: The employee submits a written copy of the grievance to the Department Head along with a copy of the decision made by the Supervisor or a statement that the Supervisor failed to provide a decision within the five (5) day limit if such is the case. The Department Head reviews the details of the grievance and, within five (5) working days, provides the employee with a written statement of what action, if any, is to be taken to resolve the grievance.

If the employee is not satisfied with the decision of the Department Head or if the Department Head fails to respond within five (5) working days, the employee may take the grievance to the next step within three (3) working days.

Step D: The employee physically submits a copy of the grievance to the County Judge along with copies of any decisions made in Steps B and C or statements of a failure of the Department Head to respond where such is the case. The County Judge will present the grievance to the members of the Commissioners' Court. The Commissioners Court may gather any additional information that may be pertinent to the grievance and, by majority decision at the next regular meeting of the Court, determine what action, if any, is to be taken to resolve the grievance. In the event the grievance arises from a department which is headed by a member of the Court, that member shall not participate in the review of the grievance or vote on the resolution of the grievance. The County Judge provides the employee with a written copy of the decision made by the Commissioners Court within two (2) working days after the meeting at which the decision was made.

The completion of Step D is the end of the County grievance process.

1B-11 DISCIPLINE

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

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

All County employees are "at will" employees and nothing in this policy gives an employee any contract of employment, guarantee of any duration of employment, or any other property interest in their job.

Gonzales County retains the right to terminate the employment of any individual at any time for any legal reason, or no reason, with or without notice. The County also retains the right to change any condition, benefit, privilege, or policy of employment at any time, with or without notice.

1B-12 LICENSE AND CERTIFICATIONS

Gonzales County has many positions that require licenses and certifications. It is the responsibility of each employee to maintain all required licenses and certifications. If an

employee is unable to renew or loses a license or certification, they must immediately notify their supervisor. If this license is a requirement for the position, the employee may be demoted, transferred, or terminated. Under no circumstances will the employee be allowed to continue in the position where a license or certification is required if failure to have such license or certification is illegal under either Federal or State Law.

1B-13 WEATHER CLOSINGS AND EMERGENCIES

As a general practice, Gonzales County does not close its operations unless the health, safety, and security of county employees are seriously brought into question. When this happens, either because of severe weather conditions or other emergencies, the County Judge is responsible for initiating the closing.

The County Judge will notify the following entities for a public announcement: local newspaper, social media accounts, nearest radio station/television station. Announcements of an emergency closing will, to the extent possible, specify the starting and ending times of the closing. However, each elected official controls the working hours of their employees, even in an emergency.

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

An employee may not work if the county or their office is closed and the County Judge or the elected official does not authorize the work time.

All time accumulated during any closed time shall be credited to a separate account on the employee Leave Report. That time must be used within 90 days of the last day the County or office is closed due to the unexpected conditions.

1B-14 CONFIDENTIALITY

Gonzales County is a public entity; however, some county employees acquire confidential (confidential, non-public) information because of their position with the county. This information must be protected. Employees who reveal confidential (confidential, non-public) information they have received because of their position may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Regarding the personnel information on employees of Gonzales County; much of the information in an employee's personnel file, including salary and job evaluations is subject to disclosure under the Public Information Act, however, highly personal matters are typically not subject to disclosure. The county will adhere to the Public Information Act requirements.

1B-15 WHISTLEBLOWER

An employee may, in good faith, report an alleged violation of a Gonzales County Policy or federal or state law to their supervisor, department head, or elected official, unless all these persons are the alleged perpetrators of the alleged violation of policy or law. If all the listed persons are alleged to be involved in the violation, the employee may report the allegation to the Human Resource Department or County Attorney. The county will investigate the reported activity.

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

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

An employee who, in good faith, believes they are being subjected to retaliation based on a report of alleged wrongdoing under this policy should immediately contact the Human Resource Department, County Attorney and/or County Judge.

An employee with a question regarding this policy should contact the Human Resource Department or County Attorney.

C. COUNTY PROPERTY AND EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

1C-1 COUNTY PROPERTY USAGE

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

1C-2 COUNTY VEHICLE USAGE

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

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

Employees who operate vehicles must maintain a current active license for the operation of that vehicle. If they have any change in the status of their license, they must immediately notify their supervisor. An employee whose job involves operation of a vehicle requiring a license for its legal

operation shall be subject to possible job change, demotion, or termination if that license is suspended or revoked. Employees must also wear a seatbelt at all times while operating a county vehicle.

Each county official must provide the commissioner's court with a list of all vehicles and drivers used for commuting, for approval.

Any Gonzales County owned or leased vehicle that is provided to an employee for use where the county requires that employee commute to and/or from work in the vehicle is subject to the following regulations:

- Neither the employee, or any other individual whose use would be taxable, may use the vehicle for personal purposes, other than commuting or de minimis personal use (such as stopping for personal errand on the way between work and the employee's home); and
- Except de minimis use, the employee does not use the vehicle for any personal use other than commuting.

Gonzales County uses the "\$1.50 one-way" commuting valuation rule, which is added to the employee's gross pay. (This means that for a five-day workweek \$15.00 will be added to the employee's gross salary as a non-cash taxable item on the employee's paycheck.)

All employees who are issued a vehicle under the above referenced section will be charged the "\$1.50 one-way" commuting. It is the responsibility of the department head or elected official to notify the payroll department, on a bi-weekly basis, of instances where the employee did not use the vehicle to commute, Example, use of vacation or sick leave. This must be clearly noted on the "top" of the timecard that is turned in to the payroll department.

Only Gonzales County employees or persons being driven by a Gonzales County employee for official Gonzales County business may be in a county owned vehicle at any given time. Clarified that Gonzales County vehicles are not to be driven for personal use. County vehicles are to be used only for transportation to and from official county business.

Gonzales County prohibits transporting minors in a county vehicle unless it is for a Law Enforcement purpose or official County business. (Revised 03.09.2026 Commissioners Court)

Misuse or abuse of the privilege of driving a county owned vehicle could lead to disciplinary action including termination of employment.

Any employee involved in an accident while operating County equipment or vehicles shall immediately report the accident to their supervisor and to the proper law enforcement or other authority immediately. A copy of all accident and incident reports prepared by the employee shall be sent to the supervisor and the County Judge.

1C-3 LAW ENFORCEMENT VEHICLE TAKE HOME POLICY

POLICY

To increase law enforcement presence and visibility in the community, alleviate the congestion of limited parking at the department and allow certain employees to respond to emergencies or

deployment while off-duty. Gonzales County Law Enforcement Agencies may enable select employees to take-home agency vehicles while off-duty. Vehicles are assigned to employees at the discretion of the Elected Official, or his/her designee, based on assignment, operational necessity, or any other criteria determined by the Elected Official. No employee has a right to a vehicle by virtue of his or her position.

DEFINITION

Take-Home Vehicle: An agency owned or controlled vehicle assigned to an employee.

PROCEDURE

The Take-Home Vehicle Program is a privilege, not a right. Employees selected for the program are issued an agency vehicle for commuting to and from their on duty law enforcement assignment. As the sole operator of this vehicle, the assigned employee is responsible for its care and use by agency rules, regulations, and policies.

ELIGIBILITY

Employees considered eligible for this program must meet the following criteria:

1. Have performed their law enforcement duties at a satisfactory level for a minimum of Phase 1 in the Field Training Program and have a safe driving record.
2. Reside within Gonzales County
3. Gonzales County Sheriff Deputies and Emergency Management that lives in adjacent counties (Lavaca, Fayette, Caldwell, Guadalupe, Wilson, or Dewitt). Employees living outside of an adjacent county will be required to park their assigned unit within Gonzales County. (See Off-Duty Parking).
4. Employee selection for this program is at the discretion of the Elected Official or designee and may be dependent on vehicle availability and distribution needs.

REVOCATION

An employee's participation in the Take-Home Vehicle Program requires adherence to program procedures, as well as department rules and regulations.

1. Supervisors employ progressive discipline for minor infractions as they occur.
2. Program infractions are documented in the employee's file.
3. The Elected Official, or his/her designee, may revoke or suspend an employee's participation in the program in addition to disciplinary action.
4. Participation in the program is a privilege, not a right.
5. The needs of the department dictate vehicle distribution and changes in the program or assignments of vehicles.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

The following items must be present in the vehicle when the vehicle is in operation:

1. If the employee is authorized to be armed, the vehicle operator must be armed.
2. Must carry or wear on their person:
 - a. Badge
 - b. Department issued ID card.
 - c. Body armor (if issued by the department), except for undercover operations.

OFF-DUTY PARKING

Take-Home vehicles are parked at the employee's residence during off-duty hours.

1. Off-street parking is preferred.
2. There may be times when neighborhood covenants dictate where a vehicle may be parked.
 - a. Employees will notify their supervisor of any covenants that conflict with this policy.
3. The vehicle will be returned and parked at the employee's office under any of the following conditions, unless otherwise directed by the Elected Official, or his/her designee.
 - a. Anytime the employee's residence is to be vacant or unattended for more than 48 hours.
 - b. While the employee is on extended leave.
 - c. If the employee is on administrative leave
 - d. When instructed by their supervisor.

The Elected Official or his/her designee may authorize a county owned vehicle to be parked at a facility within Gonzales County that meets the security requirements by the Elected Official. The employee must obtain permission from a supervisor of the facility to park at the location.

It is the responsibility of the employee to notify his or her supervisor of the address at which the county owned vehicle will be parked. This notification will be in writing. The employee will not park at any other location unless approved by the Elected Official, through chain of command. Failure to follow this policy may result in the employee's termination.

USE OF DEPARTMENT VEHICLE WHILE OFF-DUTY

During off-duty hours, the take-home vehicle is principally used for transportation to and from the employee's duty assignment and the approved parking location. The vehicle may also be used for transportation to and from:

1. Court and hearing appearances.
2. Approved community relations or crime prevention projects.
3. Special assignments by their supervisor
4. Law Enforcement funerals when authorized by a supervisor.
5. Vehicle maintenance and repair facilities
6. Other activities approved by the Sheriff.

UNAUTHORIZED USE OF DEPARTMENT VEHICLE WHILE OFF- DUTY

Employees are not authorized to and do not use take-home vehicles for the following activities:

1. Travel to or from, or at a secondary or off-duty job, unless authorized by the Department Head.
2. Respond to calls for service, unless instructed to do so.
3. Perform traffic stops for minor traffic offenses, unless instructed to do so by a supervisor.

ON-DUTY AND OFF-DUTY REQUIREMENTS

When patrol deputies first start their patrol unit, he or she will log into the in-car computer and ensure all OPS is functioning. All other equipment will be tested to make sure it is working properly.

Deputies who live in an adjacent county and are permitted to a take home vehicle, **SHALL BE REQUIRED** to be in Gonzales County before beginning of your scheduled shift or start time and **WILL NOT** leave Gonzales County before the end of your scheduled shift or end time, unless special circumstances exist and are approved by the Elected Official or his/her designee. (Deputies living in an adjacent county may not check on or off duty before entering or leaving Gonzales County).

Deputies with a take home car living in an adjacent county will not be permitted to drive a county unit while off-duty unless permission is granted by the Elected Official or his/her designee. County units will be driven to and from the deputy's residence directly to Gonzales County or assigned special work station only. Do not refuel outside of Gonzales County unless special circumstances exist, such as training or transports.

Patrol deputies going "Off-Duty" will leave all computer equipment on until you reach your authorized parking place.

If parking at a location other than the employee's residence, all firearms will be removed from the patrol unit. If the unit is parked outside your residence, in a non-secure area, all firearms are to be removed.

ALL deputies will remove their in-car computer (if equipped) from the county owned vehicle and store it inside their residence so that it is not left in an extremely hot environment.

County owned vehicles will be made accessible to an employee with Gonzales County Law Enforcement for the retrieval of the vehicle or needed equipment at any given time.

County owned vehicles, when parked, must have the switch key removed from the ignition except when circumstances reasonably dictate otherwise.

POLICY VIOLATION

Violation of this policy can result in disciplinary action, including termination and possible criminal charges.

Unauthorized Use of a Vehicle: Sec. 31.07 of the Texas Penal Code: A person commits an offense if he intentionally or knowingly operates another's boat, airplane, or motor-propelled vehicle without the effective consent of the owner. This is a felony of the third degree. "Effective consent" includes consent by a person legally authorized to act for the owner. Use of a vehicle for any purpose for which effective consent was not given would constitute an offense under this section.

Official Misconduct: Sec. 39.01 (a) A public servant commits an offense if, with intent to obtain a benefit or with intent to harm another, he intentional or knowingly:

- I. violates a law relating to his office or employment; or

- 2 misapplies anything of value belonging to the government that had come into his custody or possession by virtue of his office or employment.

1C-4 CELL PHONE USAGE

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

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

Gonzales County bans all employees from texting while operating any county owned vehicle. County employees who are driving their own personal vehicle are also banned from texting while driving on county business. Federal law prohibits any CDL driver operating any vehicle over 10,000 GWR from texting with fines and penalties, up to including loss of CDL.

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

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

County telephones are to be used for conducting the business of Gonzales County except where otherwise specifically provided by law.

Long distance calls charged to County phone lines shall be made only by County employees authorized to make long distance calls and only for official County business.

1C-5 COMPUTER AND INTERNET USAGE

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

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

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

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

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

1C-6 SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATIONS AND SERVICES PROHIBITED ON COUNTY DEVICES

Gonzales County prohibits the installation or use of the social media service TikTok, or any successor application or service developed or provided by ByteDance Limited, or an entity owned by ByteDance Limited; or a social media application or service specified by proclamation of the governor on any device owned or leased by Gonzales County and requires the removal of covered applications from those devices.

The installation and use of a covered application may be acceptable to the extent necessary for providing law enforcement; or developing or implementing information security measures. For the installation to be approved Gonzales County must require the use of measures to mitigate risks posed to this state during the use of the covered application, and the documentation of those measures.

D. SAFETY AND HEALTH EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

1D-1 WORKERS COMPENSATION

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

Employees may use paid leave for all workers' compensation time off less than 8 days. All employees who are placed on Worker's Compensation leave will fall under the Family Medical Leave Act. Gonzales County runs FMLA and Worker's Compensation concurrently.

Any employee who suffers a job-related illness or injury is required to notify their supervisor as soon as possible. Failure to promptly report job related injuries or illnesses may affect an employee's eligibility for benefits or delay benefit payments.

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

An employee's workers' compensation benefits may be adversely affected if the employee is injured while under the influence of alcohol or drugs or while the employee is engaging in horseplay.

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

1D-2 RETURN TO WORK

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

An employee on leave due to a work-related injury or illness may return to work only when Gonzales County receives a medical release from the treating doctor. It is a violation of County policy for any employee receiving worker's compensation benefits of any kind to be employed with a third party on a full-time or part-time basis. Violation of this policy may result in termination.

Return to work options:

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

Employees on light duty are not guaranteed the rate of pay they received for the position they held at the time of injury or illness. The pay rate for light duty is based on the knowledge, skills and abilities required for that job, as well as general market conditions. Employees in a light duty position are not permitted to supplement their workers' compensation benefits by using their vacation, holiday, compensatory or sick leave.

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

Employee refusal of work - In the event an employee refuses to return to regular or light duty work in response to a written, bona fide offer of employment by Gonzales County, the employee may be separated from employment with Gonzales County subject to FMLA qualification and his/her position may be filled permanently. A written, bona fide offer of employment must clearly state:

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

Medical Information

All employees' medical information is held in strict confidence in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA). Medical inquiries are limited to those permitted under the Texas Workers' Compensation Statute and applicable federal law.

Coordination with FMLA

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

Until employees have exhausted their twelve (12) week FMLA entitlement, they have the right to be reinstated to their original job or an equivalent job provided they are able to perform the essential functions of the job.

1D-3 EMPLOYEE SAFETY

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

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

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

Employees seeing unsafe working conditions shall either take steps to correct those conditions or report the unsafe conditions to their supervisor.

1D-4 DRUG AND ALCOHOL- ALL EMPLOYEES

Gonzales County is a drug and alcohol-free workplace. A county employee may not be present at work during a period the employee's ability to perform their duties is impaired by drugs or alcohol. The County believes that a drug and alcohol-free workplace will help ensure a healthy, safe, and secure work environment.

This policy applies to all employees of Gonzales County regardless of rank or position and shall include full-time, part-time, and temporary employees. The only exception to this policy is the possession of controlled substances by law enforcement personnel as part of their law enforcement duties.

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

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

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

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

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

If the use of a medication could compromise an employee's ability to do their job or the safety of the employee, fellow employees or the public, the employee must report the condition to their supervisor at the start of the workday or used appropriate personnel procedures (e.g., call in sick, use leave, request change of duty).

A supervisor must treat any information related to an employee's authorized use of prescription medications and any other medical information provided by the employee as confidential information.

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

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

An employee who voluntarily asks for time off to get treatment and recover from a drug or alcohol abuse problem will be given protections as required by law. Upon returning to work from a bona fide inpatient treatment facility, the employee will be subjected to a volunteer drug testing program as often as monthly until there is evidence the employee no longer uses it. Failure to comply with the requirements of the post rehabilitative program, including refusing the volunteer testing program will result in termination. The post rehabilitative program will last for as long as two years. If at any time the employee tests positive or refuses the volunteer drug test during this post rehabilitative program the employee will be terminated.

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

Suspicion-Based Testing: Under the Influence shall be defined as having a blood alcohol concentration of .04 or more.

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

- Abnormally dilated or constricted pupils
- Glazed stare – redness of eyes (sclera)
- Flushed face
- Change of speech (faster, slower, slurred)
- Constant sniffing
- Increased absences
- Redness under nose
- Sudden weight loss
- Needle Marks
- Change in personality (i.e., paranoia)
- Increased appetite for sweets
- Forgetfulness, performance faltering, poor concentration
- Borrowing money from co-workers or seeking an advance of pay or other unusual display of need for money.
- Constant fatigue or hyperactivity
- Smell of alcohol
- Difficulty walking
- Excessive, unexplained absences
- Dulled mental processes.
- Slow reaction rate

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

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

Post-Accident Testing:

All employees directly involved in an on-the-job accident or incident resulting in property damage and/or medical treatment shall be required to be tested for drugs and alcohol. Non-Dot employees will have a 9 panel drug screen done plus an alcohol test and DOT employees will have a 5 panel drug screen done plus an alcohol test.

Testing Procedures –

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

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

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

1D-5 DRUG AND ALCOHOL- CDL EMPLOYEES

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

The Federal Highway Administration ("FHWA") has issued regulations, which require the County to implement a controlled substance testing program. The County will comply with these. All CDL drivers are advised that remaining drug-free and medically qualified to drive are conditions of continued employment with the County.

Specifically, it is the policy of Gonzales County that the use, sale, purchase, transfer, possession, or presence in one's system of any controlled substance (except medically prescribed drugs) or alcohol by any CDL driver while on County premises, engaged in County business, while operating County equipment, or while under the authority of the County is strictly prohibited. Mandatory testing must apply to every person who operates a commercial motor vehicle in interstate or intrastate commerce and is subject to the CDL licensing requirement. Gonzales County will conduct pre-employment, random, reasonable suspicion, and post-accident drug testing in accordance with federal law.

It is the policy of Gonzales County to comply with the U.S. Department of Transportation, FMCSA Clearinghouse, a secure online database that provides employers with real-time information about CDL driver drug and alcohol program violations. Gonzales County will conduct both electronic queries and traditional manual queries with previous employers from January 6, 2020, to January 5, 2023, as required by FMCSA's drug and alcohol use testing program, for checking CDL driver violation histories. Drivers may view their own records. Employees will be required to provide a consent form from the CDL holder to conduct both Limited and Specific inquiries.

A detailed policy and procedure are available at the Human Resource office.

1D-6 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Gonzales County is committed to providing a workplace free of violence. Gonzales County will not tolerate or condone violence of any kind in the workplace. The county will also not tolerate or condone any threats of violence, direct or indirect, this includes jokes. All threats will be taken seriously and will be investigated. Employees must refrain from any conduct or comments that might make another employee suspicious or in fear for their safety. Employees are required to report all suspicious conduct or comments to their immediate supervisor. Employees should be aware of their surroundings at all times and report any suspicious behavior from the public, former employees or current employees to their immediate supervisor or the sheriff's department. No employee may possess a firearm or other weapon other than an authorized law enforcement official, with or without permits in all county offices and buildings owned or used

by Gonzales County, this also includes county owned vehicles. If employees believe that a person is violating this policy, they should immediately report to their immediate supervisor or the sheriff's department. Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to discipline up to and including immediate termination.

1D-7 SOCIAL MEDIA

For purposes of this policy "social media" includes, but is not limited to, online forums, blogs, and social networking sites, such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Instagram, etc.

Gonzales County recognizes the importance of social media for its employees. However, use of social media by employees may become a problem if: it interferes with the employee's work; is used to harass supervisors, co-workers, customers, or vendors; creates a hostile work environment; or harms the goodwill and reputation of Gonzales County among the community at large. Gonzales County encourages employees to use social media within the parameters of the following guidelines and in a way that does not produce the adverse consequences mentioned above.

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

- If your posts on social media mention Gonzales County, make clear that you are an employee of Gonzales County and that the views posted are yours alone and do not represent the views of Gonzales County.
- Do not mention Gonzales County supervisors, employees, customers, or vendors without their express consent.
- Do not pick fights. If you see a misrepresentation about Gonzales County, respond respectfully with factual information, not inflammatory comments.
- Remember, you are responsible for what you write or present on social media. You can be sued by other employees, supervisors, customers or vendors, and any individual that views your social media posts as defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous or creating a hostile work environment. Employees can be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination for what they post on social media platforms, even if the employee did not use a county computer or if the post did not occur during work hours or on county property.
- Employees may not use Gonzales County computer equipment for non-work-related activities without written permission. Social media activities should not interfere with your duties at work.
- You must comply with copyright laws and cite or reference sources accurately.
- Do not link to Gonzales County's website or post Gonzales County material on a social media site without written permission from your supervisor.
- All Gonzales County policies that regulate off-duty conduct apply to social media activity including, but not limited to, policies related to illegal harassment and code of conduct.
- Any confidential information that you obtained through your position at Gonzales County must be kept confidential and should not be discussed through in social media forum.
- Violation of this policy may lead to discipline up to and including the immediate termination of employment.

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

1D-8 HAZARD COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

The Texas Hazard Communication Act (THCA) is designed to help protect against chemical illnesses and injuries by ensuring that employers and employees are provided with sufficient information to recognize chemical hazards and take appropriate measures. Employers are required to provide this information through comprehensive chemical hazard communication programs that include safety data sheets (SDSs), labels, and worker training.

In order to comply with Texas HAZCOM Act the following written Hazard Communication Program (HCP) will be used to protect for personnel of Gonzales County. The originals will be kept on file in the Human Resource Department at the Gonzales County Randle Rather Building. Each Commissioner Precinct and each County office not located in the Courthouse will have a copy pertaining to the appropriate location. All employees are expected to comply with the program. The Gonzales County Commissioners' Court and Human Resources will be responsible for ensuring that the program is current and enforced.

A copy of this program is to be made available to employees upon hiring, and a copy will be supplied to any employees upon request. Human Resources should be contacted when a copy of the program is needed.

The program will be updated as new chemicals or hazards are introduced into the working environment. The program will be reviewed annually.

Each Elected Official, Department Head, or person ordering chemicals will check all chemical purchase requests (PR) to be sure a statement requesting a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) appears on the purchase request (PR) before being processed.

Each Elected Official, Department Head, or Supervisor will be responsible for all containers of hazardous chemicals entering the workplace, and will assure that the chemical containers are properly labeled with at least:

- (A) Chemical name
- (B) Hazard warning AND
- (C) Name and address of the manufacturer, importer, or responsible party

No container shall be used until it has been checked by a qualified person. If the chemical is to be transferred to a separate container, a qualified person will ensure that the new container is properly labeled, that all secondary containers are labeled with an extra copy of the original manufacturer's label, or with a generic label which has a block for identity and blocks for the hazard warning. For help with labeling, please contact Human Resources. Each Department Head will review the labeling system annually and update as required.

The SDS system shall include:

- a) Current master inventory list of all SDS

- b) The identity used on the SDS shall be the same as used on the container label
- c) The chemical and common name of all ingredients determined to present a hazard shall appear on all SDS

The SDS shall contain the following elements:

- a) **Identification;** includes product identifier; manufacturer or distributor name, address, phone number; emergency phone number; recommended use; restrictions on use.
- b) **Hazard(s) identification;** includes all hazards regarding the chemical; required label elements.
- c) **Composition/information on ingredients;** includes information on chemical ingredients; trade secret claims.
- d) **First-aid measures;** includes important symptoms/ effects, acute, delayed; required treatment.
- e) **Fire-fighting measures;** lists suitable extinguishing techniques, equipment; chemical hazards from fire.
- f) **Accidental release measures;** lists emergency procedures; protective equipment; proper methods of containment and cleanup.
- g) **Handling and storage;** lists precautions for safe handling and storage, including compatibilities.
- h) **Exposure controls/ personal protection;** lists OSHA's Permissible Exposure Limits (PELs); Threshold Limit Values (TLVs); appropriate engineering controls; personal protective equipment (PPE).
- i) **Physical and chemical properties;** lists the chemical's characteristics.
- j) **Stability and reactivity;** lists chemical stability and possibility of hazardous reactions
- k) **Toxicological information;** includes routes of exposure; related symptoms, acute and chronic effects; numerical measures of toxicity.
- l) **Other information;** includes the date of preparation or last revision

The original SDS's will be kept on file in the Human Resources Office. The SDS will also be part of the program for use by employees. Each office not located in the Randle Rather Building, 427 St. George Street, Gonzales, Texas 78629 will keep a current and up-to-date copy of the program and SDS's pertaining to that location on file. New chemicals shall not be used until a SDS has been obtained.

Before starting work, the respective Elected Official, Department Head, or Supervisor of a new employee will go over their copy of the HCP and each SDS applicable to their job. Before any new chemical is used, all employees will be informed of its use, will be instructed on safe use, and will be trained on hazards associated with the new chemical. All employees will attend additional training, as appropriate, to review the HCP and SDS. Appropriate library reference material will also be discussed during the training session(s).

The minimum orientation and training for a new employee is as follow:

- a) an overview of the requirements contained in the Texas Hazard Communication Act
- b) location and availability of the written HCP

- c) location of SDS file and location of hazardous inventory list
- d) interpreting labels and SDS sheets
- e) chemical hazards present in their workplace operations and this office
- f) acute and chronic effects of workplace chemical hazards
- g) methods and observation techniques used to determine the presence of, and release of, hazardous chemicals in the work area
- h) how to lessen or prevent exposure to these hazardous chemicals through usage of control/work practices and personal protective equipment
- i) steps taken by Gonzales County to lessen or prevent exposure to the chemicals listed on the inventory list
- j) emergency and first aid procedures to follow if exposed to hazardous chemicals
- k) handling, clean up, and disposal procedures

Prior to a new chemical hazard being introduced into any section of the workplace, each employee will be given information and training as outlined above.

After attending the training class, each employee will sign a form to verify that they attended the training and that the written HCP is made for review, and that he/she understands the HCP.

Before entering an establishment, a Gonzales County employee will ascertain what hazards they may be exposed to and take appropriate action to protect themselves. If the employee has any questions about what protection they need, they will contact their Department Head or Supervisor immediately.

Gonzales County will develop and maintain a list of hazardous chemicals normally present in the workplace in excess of 55 gallons or 500 pounds in aggregate amount. This Workplace Chemical List will be developed for each workplace where such quantities of hazardous chemicals are used or stored and will be available for review by employees and their designated representatives.

The Elected Official, Department Head, or Supervisor will be responsible for reviewing and updating the Workplace Chemical List as necessary, but at least by December 31st of each year.

The Workplace Chemical List will be maintained for at least 30 years. This list shall contain the old format, Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), and the new format, Safety Data Sheets (SDS).

Further Information on chemicals listed on the Workplace Chemical List can be obtained by referring to the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) located in each workplace where these chemicals are used or stored.

Before any non-routine task is performed, employees shall be advised and/or they must contact their Elected Official, Department Head, or Supervisor for special precautions to follow, and he/she shall inform any other personnel who could be exposed.

In the event such tasks are required, the Elected Official, Department Head, or Supervisor will provide the following information about such activity as it relates to the specific chemicals expected to be encountered:

- A) specific chemical name(s) and hazard(s)

- B) personal protective equipment required and safety measures to be taken
- C) measures that have been taken to lessen the hazards including ventilation, respirators, presence of other employee(s), and emergency procedures.

It will be the responsibility of official in charge of project to provide other personnel or outside contractor(s) with the following information:

- A) hazardous chemicals to which they may be exposed while in the workplace
- B) measures to lessen the possibility of exposure
- C) location of SDS for all hazardous chemicals
- D) procedures to follow if they are exposed.

The official in charge of a project will also be responsible for contacting each contractor before work is started to gather and disseminate any information concerning chemical hazards the contractor is bringing into the workplace, and vice versa.

Gonzales County will notify the Texas Department of State Health Services, Environmental Hazard Unit, Hazard Communication Program, Division for Regulatory Services, Enforcement Unit, of any employee accident that involves a hazardous chemical exposure or asphyxiation, and that is fatal to one or more employees or results in the hospitalization of five or more employees.

The Elected Official, Department Head, or Supervisor will be responsible for reporting all such accidents to the Texas Department of State Health Services, Environmental Hazards Unit, Hazard Communication Program Division for Regulatory Services, Enforcement Unit, within 48 hours after their occurrence.

Notifications will be made either orally or in writing to:

Texas Department of State Health Services – Environmental Hazards Unit
Hazard Communication Program,
P.O. Box 149347, MC 1987
Austin, TX 78714-9347
Phone: 1-800-293-0753
Fax: 1-512-834-6726
Email: TxHazComHelp@dshs.texas.gov

Division of Regulatory Services – Enforcement Unit
1100 West 49th St.
Austin, TX 78756
Phone: 512-834-6665
Fax: 512-834-6606

Employees will be responsible for reporting all accidents involving a hazardous chemical to their supervisor.

Supervisors will be responsible for reporting all accidents involving hazardous chemicals to the Elected Officials or Department Head.

Gonzales County will post and maintain in all workplaces where hazardous chemicals are used or stored the most current version of the TDH Notice to Employees, informing employees of their rights under the THCA.

The Notice to Employees shall be clearly posted and unobstructed at all locations in the workplace where notices are normally posted, and with at least one location in each workplace.

In workplaces where employees that have difficulty reading or understanding English may be present, a copy of the Notice, printed in Spanish, will be posted together with the English version of the Notice.

Gonzales County will provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to all employees who use or handle hazardous chemicals.

The Elected Official, Department Head, or Supervisor will assume overall responsibility for the PPE program and will ensure that appropriate equipment and training are provided to include:

- A) Routes of entry
- B) Permeability of PPE material
- C) Duties being performed by the employee
- D) Hazardous chemicals present
- E) Proper fit and functionality of PPE as described by the manufacturer's specifications
- F) Appropriate maintenance and storage of PPE.

Gonzales County shall not discipline, harass, or discriminate against any employee for filing complaints, assisting inspectors of the Texas Department of State Health Services, participating in proceedings related to the Act, or exercising any rights under the Act.

Employees cannot waive their rights under the Texas Hazard Communications Act. A request or requirement for such a waiver by an employer is a violation of the Act.

Per Section 502.004(f), the following chemicals are exempt from the requirements of the THCA and are outside the scope of this written program:

- A) Hazardous waste that is subject to regulation by the Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission and/or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- B) A chemical in a laboratory under the direct supervision or guidance of a technically qualified individual if: Labels on incoming containers of the chemicals are not removed or defaced, this employer complies with Sections 502.006 and 502.009 of the THCA with respect to laboratory employees; and the laboratory is not used primarily to produce hazardous chemicals in bulk for commercial purposes
- C) Tobacco or tobacco products
- D) Wood or wood products
- E) Articles formed to a specific shape or design during manufacture and that does not release or otherwise result in exposure to a hazardous chemical under normal conditions of use
- F) Food, drugs, cosmetics or alcoholic beverages

- G) Consumer products or hazardous substances used in the workplace in the same manner as normal consumer use and if the use results in a duration and frequency of exposure that is not greater than exposures experienced by a consumer
 - H) Radioactive waste
-
- A. **“Appropriate Hazard Warning”** Any words, pictures, symbols, or combination thereof appearing on a label or other appropriate form of warning which convey the healthy and physical hazards, including the target organ effects of the chemical(s) in the container(s).
 - B. **“Categories of Hazardous Chemicals”** A grouping of hazardous chemicals with similar properties.
 - C. **“Container”** Any bag, barrel, bottle, box, can, cylinder, drum, ration vessel, storage tank, or the like that contains a hazardous chemical or contains multiple smaller containers of an identical hazardous chemical. The term “container” does not mean pipes or piping systems, nor does it mean engines, fuel tanks, or other operating systems in a vehicle. A primary container is one in which the hazardous chemical is received from the supplier. A secondary container is one to which the hazardous chemical is transferred after receipt from the supplier.
 - D. **“Employee”** A person who may be or may have been exposed to hazardous chemicals in the person’s workplace under normal operating conditions or foreseeable emergencies. Workers such as office workers or accountants who encounter hazardous chemicals only in non-routine, isolated instances are not employees for purposes of this Act.
 - E. **“Expose”** Subjecting an employee to a hazardous chemical in the course of employment through any route of entry, including inhalation, ingestion, skin contact, or absorption. The term includes potential, possible, or accidental exposure under normal conditions of use or in a reasonable foreseeable emergency.
 - F. **“Hazardous Chemical”** or **“Chemical”** An element, compound, or mixture of elements or compounds, that is a physical hazard or a health hazard.
 - G. **“Health Hazard”** A chemical for which acute or chronic health effects may occur in exposed employees and which is a toxic agent, irritant, corrosive, or sensitizer.
 - H. **“Label”** Any written, printed, or graphic material displayed on or affixed to containers of hazardous chemicals, and which includes the same name as on the material safety data sheet.
 - I. **“Safety Data Sheet (SDS)”** An updated format of the previously used Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). This document contains chemical hazard and safety handling information that is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Globally Harmonized System (GHS) standard for that document. A current SDS is one which contains the most recent significant hazard information for the hazardous chemicals as determined by the chemical’s manufacturer.
 - J. **“Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)”** A previously used format of the current Safety Data Sheet (SDS). This document contains chemical hazard and safety handling information that is prepared in accordance with the past requirements of the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).
 - K. **“Physical Hazard”** A chemical which is a combustible liquid, a compressed gas, explosive, flammable, an organic peroxide, an oxidizer, pyrophoric, unstable (reactive), or water-reactive.
 - L. **“Personal Protective Equipment”** Protective equipment provided to an employee by the employer which provides a level of protection to chemicals to which the employee may be exposed that will be adequate to ensure their health and safety based on current industry standards.

M. **“Stationary Process Container”** A tank, vat, or other such container which holds different hazardous chemicals at different times.

N. **“Technically Qualified Individual”** An individual with a professional education and background working in the research or medical fields, such as a physician or registered nurse, or an individual holding a minimum of a bachelor’s degree in a physical or natural science.

O. **“Work Area”** A room, defined space, utility structure, or emergency response site in a workplace where hazardous chemicals are present, produced, or used, and where employees are.

P. **“Workplace”** A contiguous facility that is staffed 20 hours or more per week, unless such a facility is subdivided by the employer. Normally this subdivision would be a building, cluster of buildings or other structures, or a complex of buildings, but could be for a portion of a building if the employer chooses. Noncontiguous properties are always separate workplaces, in which case they can be either work areas of a headquarters’ workplace or separate workplaces, which is at the discretion of the employer.

1D-9 BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS EXPOSURE CONTROL PLAN

In accordance with Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 81, Subchapter H, and analogous to OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard, the following exposure control plan exists:

1. EXPOSURE DETERMINATION

The Texas Department of State Health Services Department Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan requires employers to perform an exposure determination for employees who have occupational exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials. The exposure determination is made without regard to the use of personal protective equipment. This exposure determination is required to list all job classifications in which employees have occupational exposure, regardless of frequency. The following job classification apply:

- 1) Deputies
- 2) Jailers
- 3) Custodians
- 4) Bailiffs

The job descriptions for the above employees encompass the potential occupational exposure risks to bloodborne pathogens.

2. IMPLEMENTATION METHODS AND CONTROLS

The department’s plan outlines a schedule and method of implementation for the various elements of the exposure control plan.

Universal Precautions

Universal Precautions are observed to prevent contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials. All blood or OPIM are considered infectious regardless of the perceived status of the source individual.

Engineering and Work Practice Controls

Engineering and work practice controls are used to eliminate or minimize exposure to employees. Where occupational exposure remains after institution of these controls, personal protective equipment is used. Examples include safety design devices, sharps containers, needleless systems, sharps with engineered sharps injury protection for employees, passing instruments in a neutral zone, etc. Supervisors and workers examine and maintain engineering and work practice controls within the work center on a regular schedule.

Handwashing

Handwashing facilities are available to the employees who may incur exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials. The department's plan requires that these facilities be readily accessible.

If handwashing facilities are not feasible, the employer is required to provide either an antiseptic cleanser in conjunction with a clean cloth/paper towel, antiseptic towelettes or waterless disinfectant. If these alternatives are used, then the hands are to be washed with soap and running water as soon as feasible.

After removal of personal protective gloves, employees wash hands and any other potentially contaminated skin area immediately or as soon as feasible with soap and water. If employees incur exposure to their skin or mucous membranes, then those areas are washed with soap and water or flushed with water as appropriate as soon as feasible following contact.

Needles

Contaminated needles and other contaminated sharps are not bent, recapped, removed, sheared, or purposely broken. The department's plan allows an exception to this if no alternative is feasible, and the action is required by a specific medical procedure. If such action is required, then the recapping or removal of the needle must be done using a device or a one-handed technique.

Contaminated Sharps Discarding and Containment

Contaminated sharps are discarded immediately or as soon as feasible in container that are closable, puncture resistant, leak proof on sides and bottom, and biohazard labeled or color-coded. During use, containers for contaminated sharps are easily accessible to personnel; located as close as is feasible to the immediate area where sharps are being used or can be reasonably anticipated to be found (e.g. laundries); maintained upright throughout use; are not allowed to overfill; and replaced routinely.

Work Area Restrictions

In work areas where there is a reasonable likelihood of exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials, employees are not to eat, drink, apply cosmetics or lip balm, smoke or handle contact lenses. Food and beverages are not to be kept in refrigerators, freezers, shelves, cabinets, or on counter/bench tops where blood or other potentially infectious materials are present. Mouth pipetting/ suctioning of blood or other potentially infectious materials is prohibited. All procedures are conducted in a manner to minimize splashing, spraying, splattering, and generation of droplets of blood or other potentially infectious materials.

Collection of Specimens

Specimens of blood or other potentially infectious materials are placed in a container, which prevents leakage during the collections, handling, processing, storage, transport, or shipping of the specimens. The container used for this purpose is labeled with a biohazard label or color-coded unless universal precautions are used throughout the procedure and the specimens and containers remain in the facility. Specimens of blood and other potentially infectious body substances or fluids are usually collected within a hospital, doctor's office, clinic, or laboratory setting. Labeling of these specimens should be done according to the agency's specimen collection procedure. This procedure should address placing the specimen in a container, which prevents leakage during the collections, handling, processing, storage, transport, or shipping of the specimens. In facilities where specimen containers are sent to other facilities and/or universal precautions are not used throughout the procedure, a biohazard or color-coded label should be affixed to the outside of the container. If outside contamination of the primary container occurs, the primary container is placed within a secondary container, which prevents leakage during the handling, processing, storage, transport, or shipping of the specimen. The secondary container is labeled with a biohazard label or color-coded. Any specimen, which puncture a primary container, is placed within a secondary container, which is puncture proof.

Contaminated Equipment

Equipment which may become contaminated with blood or other potentially infectious materials is examined prior to servicing or shipping and decontaminated as necessary unless the decontamination of the equipment is not feasible. Employers place a biohazard label on all portions of contaminated equipment that remain to inform employees, service representatives, and/or the manufacturer, as appropriate.

Personal Protective Equipment

All personal protective equipment used is provided without costs to employees. Personal protective equipment is chosen based on the anticipated exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials. The protective equipment is considered appropriate only if it does not permit blood or other potentially infectious materials to pass through or reach the employee's clothing, skin, eyes, mouth, or other mucous membranes under normal conditions of use and for the duration of the time which the protective equipment is used. Examples of personal protective equipment include gloves, eyewear with side shields, gowns, lab coats, aprons, shoe covers, face shields, and masks. All personal protective equipment is cleaned, laundered, and disposed of by the employer at no cost to employees. All garments which are penetrated by blood are removed immediately or as soon as feasible and placed in the appropriate container. All personal protective equipment is removed prior to leaving the work area and placed in the designated receptacle.

Gloves are worn where it is reasonably anticipated that employees will have hand contact with blood, other potentially infectious materials, non-intact skin, and mucous membranes. Latex sensitive employees are provided with suitable alternative personal protective equipment. Disposable gloves are not to be washed or decontaminated for re-use and are to be replaced as soon as practical when they become contaminated or as soon as feasible if they are torn, punctured, or when their ability to function as barrier is compromised.

Utility gloves may be decontaminated for re-use provided that the integrity of the glove is not compromised. Utility gloves are discarded if they are cracked, peeling, torn, punctured, exhibit other signs of deterioration, or when their ability to function as a barrier is compromised.

Masks in combination with eye protection devices, such as goggles, glasses with solid side shield, or chin length face shields, are required to be worn whenever splashes, spray, splatter, or droplets of blood or other potentially infectious materials may be generated and eye, nose, or mouth contamination can reasonably be anticipated.

Surgical caps or hoods and/or fluid resistant shoe covers or boots are worn in instances when gross contamination can reasonably be anticipated.

Housekeeping

Employers shall ensure that the worksite is maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. The employer shall determine and implement an appropriate written schedule for cleaning and method of decontamination based upon the location within the facility, the type of surface to be cleaned, type of soil present, and tasks or procedures being performed in the area.

All contaminated work surfaces are decontaminated after completion of procedures, immediately or as soon as feasible after any spill of blood or other potentially infectious materials, and at the end of the work shift.

Protective coverings (e.g. plastic wrap, aluminum foil, etc.) used to cover equipment and environmental surfaces are removed and replaced as soon as feasible when they become contaminated or at the end of the work shift.

All bins, pails, cans, and similar receptacles are inspected and decontaminated on a regularly scheduled basis.

Any broken glassware which may be contaminated is not picked up directly with the hands.

Regulated Waste Disposal

All contaminated sharps are discarded as soon as feasible in sharps containers located as close to the point of use as feasible in each work area.

Regulated waste other than sharps is placed in appropriate containers that are closable, leak resistant, labeled with a biohazard label or color-coded, and closed prior to removal. If outside contamination of the regulated waste container occurs, it is placed in a second container that is also closable, leak proof, labeled with biohazard label or color-coded, and closed prior to removal. All regulated waste is properly disposed of in accordance with federal, state, county, and local requirements.

Laundry Procedures

Although soiled linen may be contaminated with pathogenic microorganisms, the risks of disease transmission is negligible if it is handled, transported, and laundered in a manner that avoids transfer of microorganisms to patients, personnel, and environments. Rather than rigid rules and

regulations, hygienic and commonsense storage and processing of clean and soiled linen are determined by the agencies written policy and any applicable regulations. Laundry is cleaned at: Gonzales County Jail.

2. Hepatitis B Vaccine

All employees who have been identified as having occupational exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials are offered the Hepatitis B vaccine, at no cost to the employee, under the supervision of a licensed physician or licensed healthcare professional. The vaccine is offered after bloodborne pathogens training and within 10 working days of their initial assignment to work unless the employee has previously received the complete Hepatitis B vaccination series, antibody testing has revealed that the employee is immune, or that the vaccine is contraindicated for medical reasons. Employees receive the vaccine at (state location, such as Employee Health Services, Immunization Clinic, etc.). Employees who decline the Hepatitis B vaccine sign a declination statement. Employees who initially decline the vaccine but who later elect to receive it may then have the vaccine provided at no cost.

3. Post Exposure Evaluation and Follow Up

When the employee incurs an exposure incident, the employee reports to (state locations, as Employee Health Services, or designated person as Employee Health Nurse). All employees who incur an exposure incident are offered a confidential medical evaluation and follow up as follows:

1. Documentation of the route(s) of exposure and the circumstances related to the incident.
2. Identification and documentation of the source individual, unless the employer can establish that identification is infeasible or prohibited by state or local law. After obtaining consent, unless law allows testing without consent, the blood of the source individual should be tested for HIV/HBV infectivity, unless the employer can establish that testing of the source is infeasible or prohibited by state or local law.
3. The results of testing of the source individual are made available to the exposed employee with the employee informed about the applicable laws and regulations concerning disclosure of the identity and infectivity of the source individual.
4. The employee is offered the option of having his/her blood collected for testing of the employee's HIV/HBV/HCV serological status. The blood sample is preserved for at least 90 days to allow the employee to decide if the blood should be tested for HIV serological status. If the employee decides prior to that time that the testing will be conducted, then testing is done as soon as feasible.
5. The employee is offered post exposure prophylaxis in accordance with the current recommendations of the U.S. Public Health Service.
6. The employee is given appropriate counseling concerning infection status, results and interpretations of tests, and precautions to take during the period after the exposure incident.
7. The employee is informed about what potential illnesses can develop and to seek early medical evaluation and subsequent treatment.
8. The Human Resources Department is designated to assure that the policy outlined here is effectively carried out and maintains records related to this policy.

Interaction with Healthcare Professionals

A written opinion is obtained from the healthcare professional who evaluates employees of this facility or organization after an exposure incident. For the healthcare professional to adequately evaluate the employee, the healthcare professional is provided with:

1. A copy of the Gonzales County Exposure Control Plan
2. A description of the exposed employee's duties as they relate to the exposure incident.
3. Documentation of the route(s) of exposure and circumstances under which the exposure occurred.
4. Results of the source individual's blood tests (if available); and
5. Medical records relevant to the appropriate treatment of the employee.

Written opinions are obtained from the healthcare professional in the following instances:

1. When the employee is sent to obtain the Hepatitis B vaccine, or
2. Whenever the employee is sent to a healthcare professional following an exposure incident.

Healthcare professionals are instructed to limit their written opinions to:

1. Whether the Hepatitis B vaccine is indicated;
2. Whether the employee has received the vaccine;
3. The evaluation following an exposure incident;
4. Whether the employee has been informed of the results of the evaluation;
5. Whether the employee has been told about any medical conditions resulting from exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials which require further evaluation or treatment (all other findings or diagnosis shall remain confidential and shall not be included in the written report); and,
6. Whether the healthcare professional's written opinion is provided to the employee within 15 days of completion of the evaluation.

4. Communication about Hazards to Employees

Use of Biohazard Labels

Agencies should have a procedure that determines when biohazard-warning labels are to be affixed to containers or placed in color-coded bags. The procedure should include the types of materials that should be labeled as biohazard material. These materials may include but are not limited to, regulated waste, refrigerators and freezers containing blood or other potentially infectious materials, and other containers used to store, transport, or ship blood or other potentially infectious materials.

Training

Training for all employees is conducted prior to initial assignment to tasks where occupational exposure may occur. All employees also received annual refresher training. This training is to be conducted within one year of the employee's previous training. Training for employees is conducted by a person knowledgeable in the subject matter and includes an explanation of the following:

1. Chapter 96, Bloodborne Pathogen Control
2. OSHA Bloodborne Pathogen Final Rule;
3. Epidemiology and symptomatology of bloodborne diseases;
4. Modes of transmission of bloodborne pathogens;
5. Gonzales County's exposure control plan (i.e. points of the plan, lines of responsibility, how the plan will be implemented, where to access plan, etc.)
6. Procedures which might cause exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials at this facility;
7. Control methods which are used at the facility to control exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials;
8. Personal Protective equipment available at this facility (types, use, location, etc.);
9. Hepatitis B vaccine program at the facility;
10. Procedures to follow in an emergency involving blood or other potentially infectious materials;
11. Procedures to follow if an exposure incident occurs, to include U.S. Public Health Service Post Exposure Prophylaxis Guidelines;
12. Post exposure evaluation and follow up;
13. Signs and labels used at the facility; and
14. An opportunity to ask questions with the individual conducting the training.

5. Recordkeeping

According to OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens Standard, medical records are maintained by: Human Resources Department.

6. Annual Review

Gonzales County will annually review the exposure control plan. This review shall include:

1. A list of new tasks that affect occupational exposure;
2. Modifications of tasks and procedures;
3. Evaluation of available engineering controls including engineered-safer needle devices;
4. A list of new employee positions with potential for occupational exposure, and
5. Solicited and documented input from non-managerial employees responsible for direct patient care for engineering and work practice controls.

E. TRAVEL AND REIMBURSEMENT

1E-1 TRAVEL EXPENSES

Procedures for County Travel and Reimbursement

The purpose of these procedures is to establish and standardize the use of county resources to pay for travel related expenses for Gonzales County. It explains Gonzales County's Travel and Reimbursement procedures relevant to the authorization of travel and the reimbursement of expenses incurred incidental to travel.

Local Government {152.011 gives Commissioners' Court the authority to set travel expenses and other allowances for all County officials and employees.

GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

All reasonable and necessary travel by County employees for which a department budget has been established, for which a county official or department head has approved, and for which the department has funds remaining in the budget, and for which the travel is required for the employee to conduct County business is authorized in accordance with this policy. All County reimbursed travel must be for official County business only. This is meant to be a fiscally conservative policy, protecting the taxpayer dollars. The purpose of this travel and reimbursement policy is to ensure that the traveling county employee is reimbursed for actual travel related expenses. It is not intended that the employee "profit" from travel.

RESPONSIBILITY OF OFFICIALS, DEPARTMENT HEADS AND EMPLOYEES

Department Heads are expected to plan the out-of-county travel for themselves and their employees to achieve maximum economy and efficiency. All county reimbursed travel must be for OFFICIAL COUNTY BUSINESS ONLY. Travel must be approved/authorized by the Department Head.

It is the responsibility of the Department Head to see that all applicable travel expense forms are properly completed and signed before being sent to the County Auditor. Incomplete forms will be returned to the Department Head, thus delaying payment.

It is the responsibility of the person traveling on official county business to submit all receipts related to reimbursable lodging, dues, registration, and other expenses to the County Auditor along with the Travel Expense Form.

In the event an official or employee of the county receives an overpayment for travel expenses, that overpayment will be reimbursed within two weeks to the county.

TYPES OF TRAVEL

Standard Non-Overnight Travel

Standard non-overnight travel is defined as travel outside of Gonzales County to attend conferences, training, meetings, or law enforcement travel and other county related business without an overnight stay. To be eligible for meal reimbursement the traveling county employee must be gone for at least six hours.

Overnight Travel

Overnight travel is defined as travel in which the traveling county employee seeks lodging outside the county (See Section G) to attend conferences, training, meetings, or for law enforcement and other county related travel requiring an overnight stay. Overnight travel is eligible for Per Diem.

Out-of-State Travel

Out of state travel is defined as any training, conference or meeting that is submitted for travel expenses that is outside of the boundaries of the state of Texas. The Commissioners' Court must

approve all out of state travel during a regularly scheduled meeting. It is the Department Head's responsibility to make sure this item is on the agenda prior to travel. Do not submit payment requests to the County Auditor's office prior to Commissioners' Court approval.

REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES - RECEIPTS REQUIRED

Commissioners Court requires detailed receipts (not credit card summary copy or statement) for reimbursement of expenses for official county business when funds have been allocated in departmental budgets for that purpose.

Actual expenses incurred while traveling will be reimbursed, provided the employee retains the invoices, receipts, and all other documentation supporting the actual expenditure and this documentation is submitted to the County Auditor on the Travel Expense Form. (More information on meals and incidental expenditures are covered under REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES - MEALS & INCIDENTALS.)

The traveling county employee must submit receipts, invoices, and documentation, for the following to be reimbursed:

- Airline Tickets
- Automobile Expense Charges for County Vehicles Automobile Rentals
- Conference Registration and Fees Lodging Statements
- Parking Garage Charges Taxi/Shuttle Fares

If request for reimbursement on the Travel Expense Form is not supported by adequate documentation, the County Auditor will not honor the request for reimbursement, and such documentation will be returned to the department head.

Advance Payment of Reimbursable Expenses

The County will process payment, or reimburse the employee, for expenses incurred in advance if proper documentation is submitted.

REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES - MEALS & INCIDENTALS

The traveling county employee is eligible for reimbursement for meals and incidental expenses which include the cost of the meal and tips for persons who provide services, such as food servers and luggage handlers. Meal receipts are not required to be turned in to the auditor's office, however, the employee should retain all meal receipts for the department head's review.

The county employee will be granted a reimbursement for meal and incidental expenses as follows:

FOR OVERNIGHT TRAVEL: (rates effective 05/22/23)

Per Diem for meals and incidental expenses:

First day and last day of travel - \$36.00 per day

Full days away from duty station - \$ 60.00 per day

(At the employee, county official, or department head's option the employee may receive less than Per Diem, if requested. Example: meals paid for or provided at conference.)

The Per Diem may be paid in advance or subsequently at the discretion of the department head. Advance Per Diem should be turned in one week prior to a Commissioners' Court meeting. Requests for advance Per Diem must have all required conference/meeting information attached. If the advance Per Diem is not consistent with actual travel the employee shall make reimbursement within two weeks. It is the responsibility of the department head to monitor this situation.

NON-OVERNIGHT TRAVEL: (rates effective 05/22/23)

To be eligible for meal reimbursement the traveling county employee must be gone for at least six hours. The beginning and end of training /conference/ meeting, plus standard travel time will determine the six-hour requirement. Only reasonable lengths of travel time will be considered in relation to the beginning and ending of training, conference, or meeting.

A \$20 meal allowance will be paid. Travel more than 10 hours from the traveling employee's duty station will qualify for a \$25 meal allowance. Travel more than 14 hours will qualify for a \$35 meal allowance. In accordance with IRS regulations, this allowance is taxable to the employee and will be paid through the payroll department and is subject to federal income tax, FICA/Medicare, and retirement.

(At the employee, county official or department head's option the employee may receive less than the full allowance, if requested. Example: meals paid for or provided at conference.)

Requests for meal allowance must be turned in to the Auditor's office with all required documentation. Once approved the Auditor's office will process this allowance on the following payroll. Under no circumstances will the allowance be paid in advance.

REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES-NO RECEIPT REQUIRED

Documentary evidence is not required for transportation expenses for which a receipt is not available. Transportation expenses without a receipt are limited to a maximum of \$7.00 per day and include the following:

- Meter parking
- Unattended parking lots with "slot" pay.
- City bus/trolley/subway (coin drop no receipt available)
- Toll roads

Receipts are required for taxis, shuttles, bus rides, parking garages, parking lots, and all other transportation expenses. (See Section REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES – RECEIPTS REQUIRED.)

LODGING

The county will reimburse the traveling county employee for the actual cost of lodging for overnight stays. The county employee should obtain a lodging statement showing a zero balance, which will be submitted with the Travel Expense Form, when the employee returns to the county.

The county will reimburse for single occupancy only, unless two or more county employees share the room. Where two or more conference attendees, from separate counties, occupy the same room, the county will only pay a divided portion.

Items, which will be reimbursed on the hotel statement, are:

- Business Telephone Calls
- Daily Room Charges and Taxes
- Hotel Parking

TRANSPORTATION EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

Several departments in the county require their employees to use their personal vehicle for official county business. When a county employee uses a personal vehicle for this purpose, the employee may be reimbursed for the use of personal vehicle on official business at the rate per mile adopted by Gonzales County Commissioners Court.

The County will not reimburse for personal mileage or for travel between an employee's residence and their normal duty station. If an employee is required to travel to a temporary duty station, the County will pay for travel between their normal duty station and their temporary duty station if the employee is required to report to their normal duty station first.

For in-county travel, the employee should turn in mileage reimbursement request forms on a regular basis. The request form must be signed by the Department Head. Incomplete forms will be returned to the employee.

Before an employee may be reimbursed for transportation there must be a departmental budget allocation for Mileage/Travel. This allocation will be made during budget hearings or through a budget amendment made by the Commissioners' Court.

When there is a departmental budget allocation, the county employee requesting reimbursement for local transportation expense must complete a form for this purpose and submit it to the County Auditor for reimbursement with the signature and approval of the Department Head. The Automobile Mileage Reimbursement Form should be used if the employee is requesting reimbursement for mileage only. Mileage reimbursement related to training should be claimed on the Travel Expense Claim form.

An employee may use the Texas Comptroller's website to determine mileage or document mileage to and from designated stops. A copy of the Automobile Mileage Reimbursement Form is attached to this policy.

APPROVED TYPES OF TRANSPORTATION

Commercial Airlines – Commercial airlines are normally the most economical mode of transportation for out-of-state travel. Traveling employees are encouraged to take advantage of reduced rates for advanced reservations. Airline tickets may be paid for in advance directly to the airline or travel agency if the county employee submits Check Request Form when the cost

of the airline travel is determined. The county will reimburse at the lowest available airline fare for the most direct airline route.

Taxi and Bus Fares – The traveling employee will obtain receipts for taxi or bus fares and will be reimbursed by the county for those fares relating to county business. Receipts will be submitted to the County Auditor along with Travel Expense Form upon return to the county.

Auto Rental – When it is necessary, or when it is more economical to rent a car than to utilize public transportation, the traveling county employee on official county business is entitled to reimbursement for the actual cost of renting the vehicle, including motor fuel and collision damage waiver insurance. The county will reimburse for a mid-size or small size car only. Car rental agreements, along with copies of receipts for fuel and other auto expenses must be submitted to the County Auditor on Travel Expense Form for reimbursement to the traveling county employee. The Department Head must approve this in advance.

Personal Automobiles – The County will pay the traveling employee the rate per mile per Section H for mileage in accordance with the State rate for mileage while traveling in state, on out-of-county official county business. The mileage chart is based on the most direct route from the county to the destination where county business takes place plus a reasonable reimbursement for business mileage traveled while at the destination. The County will pay no other automobile expense to the traveling employee other than the fixed rate per mile as set.

All out-of-state travel on official county business will be reimbursed at commercial airline rates. All mileage is calculated from the employee's duty station.

County owned vehicle – The traveling county employee may be reimbursed for emergency out of pocket expenses, such as gas, oil or other such maintenance items incurred while out of county. Receipts are required for all these items. Any expenses incurred while within the county must follow normal purchasing guidelines.

TRAVEL EXPENSE FORMS

There are a few travel forms. Each form is included as a part of this policy and is available in the County Auditor's Office. The Department Head must approve all requests before the request is processed. Incomplete forms shall be returned to the Department Head.

1. **Travel Expense Forms** – must be completed for ALL requests for reimbursement for official county business travel.
2. **Vehicle Mileage Reimbursement Form** – must be completed for all requests for reimbursement for mileage only, not related to training, conferences, or meetings.
3. **Check Request Form** – must be completed if you prefer the County Auditor to make payment directly to the vendor for the cost of hotel, registration, airline, etc. This is the preferred method of payment to the vendors but must be presented to the County Auditor 3-4 weeks before the conference/seminar to allow sufficient

time to meet the payment deadline. The registration and agenda for the seminar/conference must accompany the request for payment.

BUDGET/END OF YEAR

Travel expenses are charged to the budget year in which they occurred. All travel expenses through September 30th must be submitted to the Auditor's Office by October 15th of each year. Expenses not submitted by year-end cut off will not be paid.

GENERAL DEFINITIONS

Accountable Plan – a plan under which an employee is reimbursed for expenses.

The following three conditions must be satisfied:

- a. There must be a county business purpose for the expense; and
- b. The employee must clearly show and properly support the time, dates, place, and County business purpose.
- c. The employee must return any excess reimbursement or allowances within a reasonable time.

Adequate Records – You should provide documentary evidence that together with your record will support each element of an expense. Generally, you must have documentary evidence, such as receipts or bills to support your expenses. Except, documentary evidence is not required for per diem reimbursement or transportation expenses for which a receipt is not available i.e., meter parking.

Auditor – the County Auditor and/or their designated staff.

County – with a capital "C" refers specifically to Gonzales County.

Detailed Receipt – shows date, vendor/company name, specific items purchased (description of purchase) and total.

Direct Billing – pre-arranged billing, established for a county employee with a lodging facility at which they plan to stay when away from their place of employment overnight on County business.

Duty Station – the primary place of employment, i.e., courthouse, road and bridge, tax office, etc.

Educational Travel – out-of-County travel that is undertaken by County employees for approved education seminars, conferences, and meetings.

Incidental Expenses – include but are not limited to fees and tips for people who provide services, such as food servers and luggage handlers.

In-County Travel – travel that takes place within the confines of the legal boundaries of Gonzales County, and where the primary end destination of the travel is within these same boundaries.

Law Enforcement Travel – travel expenses incurred by County law enforcement personnel or Juvenile Probation Personnel for the explicit purpose of transporting prisoners and/or probationers, collection of evidence, and other travel directly attributable to official County business.

Mileage – the distance from point of origin to destination. The County will be following the Mileage Guide on the Texas Comptroller's website when applicable, as well as justified documented mileage, when not on the Texas Comptroller's website or chosen by the employee (must be substantiated with "to and from" shown).
www.window.state.tx.us/comptrol/texastra.html

Mileage Rate – the rate of reimbursement established by the Commissioners' Court for use of a personal automobile while on County business.

No Detailed Receipt – does not show detail. For example: receipt that shows hotel and amount but does not break down by daily rate and taxes. i.e., credit card receipt and/or credit card statement.

Official County Business – a function in which County employee(s) are participating, and which is recognized by the Commissioners' Court as being official business of Gonzales County.

Out-of-County Travel – any travel that has a primary end destination outside the legal boundaries of Gonzales County.

Parking Fees and Tolls – in addition to using the standard mileage rate, you can claim any business-related parking fees and tolls. (Parking fees that you pay to park your car at your place of work are nondeductible commuting expenses.)

Travel Expenses – transportation (airline fares, personal auto, public transportation, parking, taxi), meals, lodging, and incidental expenses associated with traveling on official County business.

Travel Expense Forms – all forms designated by the Auditor's office to be used to report actual travel expenses for official county business. These forms are to be submitted to the Auditor's office for reimbursement of travel expenses. The expense forms are in back of Policy Manual. Please check with Human Resources to make sure the expense forms are up to date in this policy.

Traveling County Employee – a Department Head, or a person employed in the direct service of a Department Head who is traveling on official County business.

EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

A. EMPLOYEE PAYROLL

2A-1 FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT SAFE HARBOR

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

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

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

It is a violation of Gonzales County policy for any employee to falsify a timecard, or to alter another employee's timecard. It is also a serious violation of County policy for any employee, supervisor or official to instruct another employee to incorrectly or falsely report hours worked, or to alter another employee's timecard to under- or over-report hours worked. If anyone instructs you to (1) incorrectly or falsely under- or over-report your hours worked, or (2) alter another employee's time records to inaccurately or falsely report that employee's hours worked, you should report it immediately to Human Resources 427 St. George Street, Basement, 830-339-8476.

If you are classified as an exempt salaried employee, you will receive a salary which is intended to compensate you for all hours worked for the County. This salary will be established at the time of hire or when you become classified as an exempt employee. While it may be subject to review and modification from time to time, the salary will be a pre-determined amount that will not be subject to deductions for variations in the quantity or quality of the work you perform.

For exempt employees, your salary may also be reduced for certain types of deductions such as your portion of health, dental or life premiums; state, federal or local taxes, social security, retirement; or voluntary contributions to a deferred compensation plan. In any workweek in which you performed any work, your wages may be reduced for any of the following reasons: 1) absence from work for one or more full days for personal reasons, other than sickness or disability; or 2) full day disciplinary suspensions for infractions of our written policies and

procedures; or 3) full day for violating safety rules of a major significance; or 4) Family and Medical Leave or Military Leave absences; or 5) to offset amounts received as payment for jury and witness fees or military pay; or 6) the first or last week of employment in the event you work less than a full week.

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

Please note it is not an improper deduction to reduce an employee's accrued vacation, personal or other forms of paid time off for full or partial day absences for personal reasons, sickness, or disability.

If you have questions about deductions from your pay, please immediately contact your supervisor. If you believe you have been subject to any improper deductions or your pay does not accurately reflect your hours worked, you should immediately report the matter to the payroll clerk, 427 St. George, Ste. 304, 830-519-4302. If you are unsure of who to contact or if you have not received a satisfactory response within five business days after reporting the incident, please immediately contact the Human Resource Department 427 St. George Street, Gonzales, Texas 78629 phone: 830-339-8476. Every report will be fully investigated, and corrective action will be taken where appropriate, up to and including discharge for any employee(s) who violates this policy. In addition, the County will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who report alleged violations of this policy or who cooperate in the County's investigation of such reports. Retaliation is unacceptable, and any form of retaliation in violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

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

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

2A-3 COMPENSATION

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

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

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

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

Some employees may have the classification of hourly employees paid on a salary basis, but they remain non-exempt for FLSA purposes. For full-time non-exempt employees, the monthly salary compensates the employee for all hours worked up to 40 in each workweek of the month.

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

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

2A-4 PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

Deductions shall be made from each employee's paycheck for federal withholding, social security, Medicare, and any other deductions required by law.

Employees eligible for membership in the Texas County and District Retirement System shall have their contributions to that system deducted from each paycheck. Any optional deductions authorized by the Commissioners' Court and approved by the employee shall also be made from the employee's paycheck.

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

2A-5 WORK WEEKS AND WORK PERIODS

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

2A-6 TIMESHEETS

Each employee must fill out a time sheet to be turned in to their supervisor on the last day of each pay period. Failure to complete a timesheet may result in an employee only receiving minimum wage payment until the proper time sheet has been completed and turned into the payroll department. All corrections will be made on the next regularly scheduled payroll. The time sheet prepared by the employee shall show an accurate record of all time worked and leave taken, whether paid or unpaid, for the pay period. Time sheets are governmental documents and as such require accurate and truthful information. Falsifying a time sheet, a governmental record is a criminal offense. Employees shall only use appropriate available leave to account for their regular weekly work schedule.

The County Auditor shall be required to keep copies of all time sheets or time cards and other payroll records submitted to him/her for a minimum of three (3) years.

2A-7 PAY PERIODS

The pay period for Gonzales County is biweekly. Checks are issued every two (2) weeks on Thursday for each fourteen (14) day period, two weeks after the end of the pay period. The payroll period shall begin at 12:01 a.m. on Friday and end at midnight of the second Thursday of the period. Payroll checks shall be issued on the Thursday following the end of each pay period. If a payday falls on a holiday or a weekend, paychecks shall be issued on the last workday immediately preceding the holiday or weekend.

2A-8 WORK SCHEDULES

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

2A-9 HOURS WORKED

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

2A-10 LAW ENFORCEMENT PAY AND OVERTIME

Gonzales County Commissioners Court has adopted the 207(k) exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act for law enforcement employees, which includes deputies and jailers. These employees have a work period of fourteen (14) days and overtime will be accrued after eighty-six (86) hours worked. Paid leave shall not be counted in determining if overtime has been worked in any workweek, except for grant-related reimbursements. Except in emergency situations, an employee shall be required to have authorization from their supervisor before working overtime.

2A-11 COMPENSATORY TIME POLICY – Revised 01-01-2027

Purpose and Scope

1. **Purpose.** This Compensatory Time Policy establishes the rules and procedures governing the accrual, use, and administration of compensatory time off for eligible employees of Gonzales County, Texas, in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and applicable federal and state laws.
2. **Scope.** This Policy applies to all non-exempt County employees who are eligible to earn compensatory time in lieu of overtime pay. Exempt employees are not eligible for compensatory time under this Policy.
3. **Policy Statement.** The County recognizes that operational needs may require non-exempt employees to work beyond their regular scheduled hours. When approved in advance by the employee's supervisor, non-exempt employees may earn compensatory time off in lieu of overtime pay, subject to the terms and conditions set forth in this Policy.

Definitions

1. **Compensatory Time (Comp Time).** Paid time off accrued by a non-exempt employee in lieu of overtime compensation for hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek.
2. **Non-Exempt Employee.** An employee who is covered by the overtime provisions of the FLSA and is entitled to overtime compensation for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek.
3. **Overtime Hours.** All hours actually worked by a non-exempt employee in excess of 40 hours in a workweek.
4. **Workweek.** A fixed and recurring period of 168 hours consisting of seven consecutive 24-hour periods. For purposes of this Policy, the County's workweek begins at 12:00 a.m. Friday and ends at 11:59 p.m. the following Thursday.
5. **Department Head.** The elected official, appointed official, or designated supervisor with authority over a County department or office.
6. **Accrual Rate.** The rate at which compensatory time is credited, which is one and one-half hours of compensatory time for each overtime hour worked.

Eligibility and Accrual

1. **Eligible Employees.** Only non-exempt employees are eligible to earn compensatory time under this Policy. An employee's exempt or non-exempt status is determined by the County in accordance with FLSA regulations and is subject to periodic review.
2. **Rate of Accrual.** Non-exempt employees shall accrue compensatory time at the rate of one and one-half hours of compensatory time for each overtime hour worked.
3. **Maximum Accrual – 80-Hour Cap.** No employee may accrue more than 80 hours of compensatory time. Once an employee reaches the 80-hour maximum accrual limit, the employee shall be paid for any additional overtime hours worked at the rate of one and one-half times the employee's regular rate of pay until the employee's compensatory time balance falls below 80 hours.
4. **Prior Authorization Required.** Compensatory time may be earned only for overtime hours that have been approved in advance by the employee's supervisor or Department Head. Employees must obtain written authorization before working overtime hours for which compensatory time will be earned.
5. **Calculation of Overtime Hours.** For purposes of determining overtime hours eligible for compensatory time accrual, only actual hours worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek shall be counted. Paid leave time, including vacation, sick leave, holiday pay, and other paid time off, shall not be counted as hours worked for purposes of calculating overtime.
6. **Documenting Overtime Hours.** Each eligible employee shall document on their timesheets the approved timed worked including a detailed description of the work performed.

Use of Compensatory Time

1. **Employee Request.** An employee may request to use accrued compensatory time for any reason by submitting a written request to the employee's supervisor or Department Head in accordance with the County's normal leave request procedures.
2. **Advance Notice.** Employees should provide as much advance notice as practicable when requesting to use compensatory time. Except in cases in emergency or unforeseeable circumstances, employees should submit requests to use compensatory time at least two business days in advance.
3. **Supervisory Approval.** The use of compensatory time is subject to the approval of the employee's supervisor or Department Head. Approval shall not be unreasonable withheld but may be denied or rescheduled if granting the request would unduly disrupt County operations.

4. **Minimum Increments.** Compensatory time must be used in minimum increments of 0.25 hours, consistent with the County's timekeeping practices.
5. **Priority of Use.** The County may require employees to use accrued compensatory time before using other forms of paid leave, at the discretion of the Department Head.
6. **Mandatory Use Upon Reaching Maximum.** If an employee reaches the 80-hour maximum accrual limit, the Department Head may require the employee to schedule and use compensatory time to reduce the balance below the maximum before authorizing additional overtime work.

Payment of Compensatory Time

1. **Payment Upon Separation.** Upon separation from County employment for any reason, including resignation, retirement, termination, or layoff, an employee shall be paid for all unused accrued compensatory time at the higher of:
 - a. The employee's final regular rate of pay; or
 - b. The average regular rate of pay received by the employee during the last three years of employment.
2. **Payment in Lieu of Use.** At the discretion of the County, the County may pay an employee for all or part of the employee's accrued compensatory time balance in cash at any time, at the employee's regular rate of pay at the time of payment.
3. **Mandatory Payout.** If operational needs require, the County may mandate payment of accrued compensatory time balances to employees who are approaching or have reached the 80-hour maximum accrual limit.

Timekeeping and Records

1. **Accurate Timekeeping.** All employees must accurately record all hours worked and all compensatory time earned and used in accordance with the County's timekeeping procedures. Employees must submit timesheets or time records as required by their Department Head and in accordance with the County's payroll schedule. The timesheets shall include a detailed description of the work performed.
2. **Supervisor Responsibility.** Supervisors and Department Heads are responsible for monitoring employee compensatory time balances, ensuring compliance with the 80-hour maximum accrual limit, and maintaining accurate records of compensatory time earned and used.
3. **Records Retention.** The County shall maintain records of compensatory time accrual, use, and payout in accordance with FLSA recordkeeping requirements and the County's records retention schedule.

Transfer and Forfeiture

1. **Transfer Between Departments.** When an employee transfers from one County department to another, the employee's accrued compensatory time balance shall transfer with the employee, subject to the written agreement of the receiving Department Head.
2. **No Forfeiture Without Cause.** Accrued compensatory time shall not be forfeited except as provided by law or this Policy. The County shall not implement policies that result in the automatic forfeiture of accrued compensatory time.
3. **Forfeiture Upon Unauthorized Absence.** An employee who is absent without authorized leave for one (1) or more consecutive workdays may be deemed to have abandoned employment, and any accrued compensatory time balance may be forfeited in accordance with County personnel policies.

Administration and Compliance

1. **Human Resources Oversight.** The County Human Resources Department shall oversee the administration of this Policy and shall provide guidance and training to Department Heads and employees regarding compensatory time practices.
2. **Department Head Responsibilities.** Each Department Head is responsible for ensuring that employees within the department comply with this Policy and that compensatory time accruals, use, and payments are properly documented and approved.
3. **Recordkeeping and Audits.** The County shall maintain complete and accurate records of all compensatory time transactions. The County Auditor or designee may conduct periodic audits of compensatory time records to ensure compliance with this Policy and applicable law.
4. **Prohibition of Coercion.** No supervisor, Department Head, or other County official may coerce, pressure, or unduly influence an employee to accept compensatory time in lieu of paid overtime for overtime hours worked. The decision to participate in the compensatory time program must be voluntary.

Amendments and Effective Date

1. **Amendments.** This policy may be amended at any time by Commissioners Court upon written notice to employees. Amendments shall be effective as of the date specified in the amending resolution or order.
2. **Supersession.** This Policy supersedes all prior County policies, practices, and understandings regarding compensatory time, whether written or oral.

3. **Severability.** If any provision of this Policy is held to be invalid or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions shall continue in full force and effect.

2A-12 DEMOTIONS

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

2A-13 TRANSFERS

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

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

2A-14 PROMOTIONS

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

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

2A-15 SEPARATIONS

Separation shall be defined as any situation in which the employer-employee relationship between the County and a County employee ends. All separations from Gonzales County shall be designated as one of the following types:

1) resignation; 2) retirement; 3) dismissal; 4) reduction in force; or 5) death.

A resignation shall be classified as any situation in which an employee voluntarily leaves their employment with Gonzales County and the separation does not fall into one of the other categories. Employees who are resigning should submit a written notice of resignation to their supervisor. If an employee would like to do an exit interview contact the Human Resources Department at 830-339-8476.

A retirement shall be any situation in which an employee meets the requirements to collect benefits under the County's retirement program and voluntarily elects to leave employment with the County to do so. An employee who is retiring should notify their supervisor of that intent at least 30 days prior to the actual retirement date to help prevent delays in starting the payment of retirement benefits.

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

An employee shall be separated from employment because of a reduction in force when their position is abolished or when there is a lack of funds to support the position or there is a lack of work to justify the position.

A separation by death shall occur when an individual dies while currently employed by the County. If an employee dies while still employed by the County, their legally designated beneficiary or estate shall receive all earned pay and payable benefits.

2A-16 RETIREE REHIRES

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

The retiree must have a bona fide separation of employment and have retired for a minimum of 30 days. A bona fide separation means there is no prior agreement or understanding between Gonzales County and the retiree that the retiree would be rehired after retirement. According to Rule 107.4 adopted by the TCDRS Board of Trustees, restrictions apply to elected officials, people employed for the same or different position in the same or different department, employee status changes, and independent contractors.

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

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

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

B. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

2B-1 MEDICAL AND LIFE INSURANCE

ELIGIBILITY All regular full-time employees of Gonzales County shall be eligible for coverage under group hospitalization, medical and/or life insurance programs available because of employment by the County.

- a. A sixty to ninety (60 to 90) day waiting period was established by the Commissioners Court for employee eligibility for County health insurance and County life insurance (Commissioners Court 09-22-14).
- b. If an eligible employee requests a leave of absence prior to fulfilling the sixty to ninety day waiting period and returns to service prior to the twelfth week leave of absence granted (Policy 2B-14), the 60 to 90 day accumulation of waiting period time will resume at the number of days the employee had accumulated when leave began. If the employee exceeds the twelfth week leave of absence, then the accumulation of the sixty to ninety day waiting period will start over upon return of service.

The County will pay all or a part of the premium for health insurance coverage of eligible employees. The amount paid by the County shall be established by the Commissioners Court through normal budget procedures. Expenses for programs not paid for by the County must be paid by the employee.

DEPENDENT COVERAGE An employee eligible for coverage under any group hospitalization, medical and/or life insurance programs of the County may include family members under such programs if they meet the eligibility requirements of the programs, which may vary from year to year. Any cost of such coverage must be paid by the employee.

All costs including premiums for family members covered under any programs shall be deducted from the employee's paycheck.

BENEFITS Health and life insurance coverage will take effect on the first day of the month following the completion of the sixty (60) day waiting period.

COBRA Employees and their covered dependents may be able to continue their coverage for a period by paying the total cost if coverage terminates due to death, divorce, age, termination of employment or another qualifying event.

2B-2 CONTINUATION OF GROUP INSURANCE POST EMPLOYMENT

The federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) allows certain former employees and dependents the option of continuing their group health insurance, at the individuals' full expense, under specified conditions, beyond the date on which it would

otherwise terminate. Insurance information from the County's group insurance carrier is given to each employee at the time of employment that explains these options under the County's carrier. Later revisions in group insurance coverage are explained in subsequent insurance information distributed to each employee at the time the coverage revision is effective. Each covered former employee will be sent information and forms by mail from WTW Benefit Connect COBRA department. Gonzales County does not handle the COBRA insurance that is handled by the WTW Benefit Connect COBRA department.

2B-3 OTHER PLANS – MASA

Gonzales County may provide emergency transportation coverage through MASA for all eligible employees.

2B-4 VACATION

The following employee classifications shall be eligible for the vacation benefit: All full time exempt and non-exempt employees. These following employee classifications shall not be eligible for the vacation benefit: Part-time and temporary employees.

Each regular full-time exempt and non-exempt employee will accrue vacation leave according to the following schedule:

Years of Service	Biweekly Accrual	Annual Accrual
Hire date up to 5 years	3.08	80.08 hours
5-year anniversary date	3.39	88.14 hours
6-year anniversary date	3.70	96.20 hours
7-year anniversary date	4.00	104.00 hours
8-year anniversary date	4.31	112.06 hours
9-year anniversary date	4.62	120.12 hours

Vacation shall not be accrued while an employee is on leave without pay. Accrual of vacation shall begin at the time an employee begins work in a position eligible to accrue vacation, but an employee must work for a minimum of 6 months in such a position before being eligible to take any vacation.

The maximum amount of unused vacation an employee shall be allowed to have at one time is 80 hours. Employees are only allowed to carry over 80 hours of vacation per year. Anything over the 80 hours at the end of the year shall be taken away without being compensated for those hours.

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

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

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

If an employee has worked for at least 6 months in a position which accrues vacation at the time the employee resigns, is discharged, or is terminated for any other reason, the employee shall receive pay for all unused vacation up to the maximum allowed under this policy. The maximum the County will pay out when an employee leaves employment is 120 hours of vacation.

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

Should a previous employee be rehired with Gonzales County, in any capacity, they must follow the new hire policy (ref. page or section) for vacation accrual, sick accrual, and insurance.

Nothing shall be transferred over from their prior employment with Gonzales County.

(Commissioners Court 09.29.2025)

2B-5 SICK LEAVE

The following employee classifications shall be eligible for the sick leave benefit: All full-time exempt and non-exempt employees. These employee classifications shall not be eligible for the sick leave benefit: Temporary and part-time employees.

Eligible employees shall accrue sick leave at a rate of 3.70 hours bi-weekly. Accrual of sick leave shall start at the time an individual begins work for the County in a position eligible for the sick leave benefit but may not be used until the pay period after the 6 month waiting period is over. Sick leave shall not be accrued while an employee is on leave without pay.

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

Where sick leave is to be used for medical appointments, an employee shall be required to notify their supervisor of the intent to use sick leave as soon as the employee knows of the appointment. Where use of sick leave is not known in advance, an employee shall notify their supervisor of the intent to use sick leave within 15 minutes of the employee's normal time to begin work, when practicable. Where it is not practicable to notify the supervisor within 15 minutes of the normal starting time, the employee should notify their supervisor as soon as is reasonably practicable. If the employee feels that the situation will cause the employee to miss more than one day of work, the employee should notify their supervisor of the anticipated length of absence. The employee will be placed on FMLA, if event and employee is eligible. If an employee uses three (3) or more consecutive days of sick leave, the supervisor shall have the right to require a physician's statement or some other acceptable documentation of injury or illness, for either the employee's own illness or the illness of an immediate family member. Employees who have a pattern of abusing sick leave may be required to provide a physician's statement for those absences as required by their supervisor.

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

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

Should a previous employee be rehired with Gonzales County, in any capacity, they must follow the new hire policy (ref. page or section) for vacation accrual, sick accrual, and insurance.

Nothing shall be transferred over from their prior employment with Gonzales County.

(Commissioners Court 09.29.2025)

An employee shall receive no pay for unused sick leave hours at the time of termination/resignation of employment.

2B-6 SICK LEAVE POOL

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Gonzales County Sick Leave Pool is to provide additional sick leave days to County employees in the event of a catastrophic illness or injury, surgery, or disability that prevents an employee from active employment. Days may be applied from the Pool only after the employee has exhausted all accrued sickness, vacation, and compensatory time.

DEFINITIONS

- 1) A catastrophic illness or injury is defined as:
 - a) A terminal, life-threatening, and/or severe condition or combination of conditions affecting the mental or physical health of the employee that requires the services of a licensed health practitioner for a prolonged period and that forces the employee to exhaust all accrued leave time (sick leave, vacation leave, and compensatory time) and to lose compensation from the County.
- 2) A licensed medical practitioner is defined as:
 - a) A medical practitioner, as is defined by the Texas Insurance Code, someone who practices within the scope of his/her license.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE POOL

At the direction of the Commissioners' Court, the Human Resource Department Representative shall serve as the Sick Leave Pool Administrator. The Sick Leave Pool Administrator shall be responsible for developing mechanisms to transfer accrued sick leave into and out of the Sick Leave Pool, developing rules and procedure for the operation of the Sick Leave Pool, and developing forms for contributing leave to, or using leave from the Sick Leave Pool.

The Sick Leave Pool Committee will consist of the County Clerk, District Clerk, (2) Commissioners, and an employee from the County Judge's office. The Commissioners will serve (1) year terms and switch out with the other 2 Commissioners. Commissioners 1 and 2 will serve a term together and Commissioners 3 and 4 will serve a term together. This committee shall be responsible for reviewing all applications for use of leave from the Sick Leave Pool.

SICK LEAVE POOL MEMBERSHIP

All regular full-time employees are eligible to join the Sick Leave Pool by contributing a minimum of one day or a maximum of five days accrued sick leave. Days donated will be subtracted from their accrued leave.

New employees may join the Sick Leave Pool after twelve (12) months of continuous employment with the County.

After the Sick Leave Pool is established, employees will only be able to join at a time designated each year by the Sick Leave Pool Administrator, or in the case of new employees, immediately upon completion of twelve (12) months of continuous service with the County.

Membership enrollment forms must be submitted to the Human Resource Office.

Days donated to the Sick Leave Pool become the property of Gonzales County Sick Leave Pool and cannot be returned in the event of membership cancellation.

Employees on approved leave of absence will retain membership in the Sick Leave Pool and will not be required to donate additional days.

To maintain the Sick Leave Pool, all members must donate a minimum of one (1) day or a maximum of five (5) days of sick leave each October 1st, or at a time during the fiscal year designated by the Sick Leave Pool Administrator for general membership donations. Only one (1) donation during the fiscal year is required to maintain membership in the Sick Leave Pool.

DAYS GRANTED

Days will be granted only from catastrophic illness or injury, surgery, or disability that necessitates an absence from work for five (5) consecutive days or longer. In the case of chemotherapy for cancer treatment, days can be granted for one (1) to four (4) days absence.

Pregnancy will not be covered by the Sick Leave Pool, but complications due to pregnancy or delivery will be considered.

The Sick Leave Pool may be used only by members for their personal illness or disability or for a family member whose illness and relationship to the employee meet the guidelines for the Family and Medical Leave Act and the Gonzales County Family and Medical Leave Policy as contained in the Gonzales County Policy on Leave of Absence.

Days requested for stress related illness will be granted for hospitalized days only.

The maximum number of days granted to an employee each year shall not exceed one-third (1/3) of the total amount of time in the Pool at the time of the request or ninety (90) days, whichever is less.

Days will not be granted when an employee is receiving worker's compensation or long-term disability benefits.

A member of the Sick Leave Pool, who exhausts all of his/her, accrued paid leave and compensatory time to which the employee is otherwise entitled, may withdraw from the pool for a non-catastrophic illness the exact number of days the member had contributed that fiscal year.

PROCEDURE

An eligible employee must apply to the Human Resources Office/Sick Pool Administrator for permission to use time in the Sick Leave Pool.

The Sick Leave Pool Administrator shall present the application to the Sick Leave Pool Administrative Committee, who shall determine eligibility.

If the employee is determined to be eligible, the Pool Administrator shall approve the transfer of time from the Sick Leave Pool to the employee. The time shall be credited to the employee and shall be used in the same manner as accrued sick leave.

An employee absent on sick leave assigned from the Sick Leave Pool is treated for all purposes as if the employee were absent on accrued sick leave.

If a member is critically ill and unable to file an application for sick leave from the Sick Leave Pool, his/her department head may apply at the request of the employee's family.

The Sick Leave Pool Administrator will track each employee receiving sick leave pool hours for 12 months following the date the award is initially used by the employee.

FINAL AUTHORITY

The Sick Leave Pool Administrative Committee shall have the final approval/disapproval of employee applications.

APPLICATION FORMS

Applications for donation of accrued sick time to the Gonzales County Sick Leave Pool are available in the Human Resources Office. Applications for withdrawal from the Gonzales County Sick Leave Pool are available in the Human Resources Office. Sick Leave Pool forms are located in back of Policy Manual as well. Before using the forms in the Policy Manual please check with the Human Resources Office to make sure they are the latest forms.

2B-7 LONGEVITY -Revised 07.27.2026

Regular full-time employees and all elected officials shall be eligible for longevity pay. Longevity pay is defined as an amount of compensation paid to eligible employees and elected officials based upon length of service with Gonzales County.

Part time and/or temporary employees will not receive longevity. If a part time or temporary employee becomes a full-time employee, the longevity benefit will be calculated from the day the employment became full time.

ELIGIBILITY PERIOD Eligible employees and elected officials shall be entitled to receive longevity pay as a part of their regular compensation beginning in the first month following service to the County for a total of five (5) years. In calculating the eligibility period, each month during which an employee or official is in the service of the County as an eligible employee or official shall be included. Longevity pay will be paid in a separate paycheck as a single lump sum payment in November or December in the year in which it was earned.

AMOUNT Regular full-time employees and officials are eligible for longevity pay after five years of continuous service. After five years of continuous service, longevity is provided to employees at the rate of \$100.00 per each full month of service from the employee's or official's start date through September 30th after their 5th anniversary of their start date (up to but not to exceed \$1200.00). Beginning the employees and officials 6th anniversary year and for each additional continuous year \$20.00 per month of longevity is provided (i.e., 6 years=\$1440, 7 years=\$1680, etc.). This amount will be calculated from October 1st through September 30th each year following the initial longevity payment after 5 years of continuous service.

All eligible employees and officials will receive longevity pay in an amount per month for each year of service to the County. The amount of longevity pay to be received shall be established each year during the budget adoption procedure and shall be included in the budget.

MAXIMUM ACCRUAL All eligible employees and elected officials may receive longevity pay as additional monthly compensation to a maximum compensation for forty (40) years of service to the County. Periods after forty (40) years of service shall be eligible for the maximum amount due to the employee or official.

BRIDGING An employee or official who leaves the service of Gonzales County for any reason and is hired back will have to start over on their eligibility period of 5 years. (Commissioners Court 09.29.2025)

ACTIVE EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENT The employee must be actively employed by the County on September 30th of the applicable Fiscal Year to be eligible. An employee who separates from County employment prior to September 30th for any reason, including resignation, retirement, termination, or death, shall not be eligible for Longevity Pay for that Fiscal Year.

2B-8 HOLIDAY – Revised 02.12.2026

The following employee classifications shall be eligible for the holiday benefit: All full-time, exempt, and non-exempt employees. These employee classifications shall not be eligible for the holiday benefit: All temporary and part-time employees.

The County holidays shall be determined by the Gonzales County Commissioners' Court.

If a paid holiday occurs during the vacation of an eligible employee, that day shall be paid as a holiday and not be charged against the employee's vacation balance. If a designated holiday falls on an eligible employee's day off, the employee shall be allowed to take another day off with pay during the following 90 days. An employee shall not be allowed to take a day off with pay prior to a holiday in anticipation of working on the holiday.

An eligible employee scheduled to work or called in to work on a holiday because of an emergency, shall be given paid time off during the next 90 days equivalent to the amount of time designed for the holiday.

For non-essential employees scheduled to work for purposes outside of their normal duties, but limited to assisting with Elections, during a County holiday, the employee is to be paid for the hours worked at time and a half. The employee may choose to apply this holiday pay as comp time or the employee may choose to be paid out this amount on their next paycheck. Final approval for qualification of this pay is at the Department Head's discretion. If approved, the employee shall detail, on their timecard for the appropriate pay period, the description of the work completed and whether the accrued time will be comp time or paid out.

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

Holidays do not accrue and if they are not taken, they will not be paid at termination.

2B-9 HOLIDAY LEAVE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT

All Deputies, Jailers, and Dispatchers will earn eight (8) hours of Holiday Pay for each official County holiday. (Commissioners Court 09.29.2025)

Holiday leave shall be taken in eight (8) hour increments.

Law Enforcement, Detention Officers, and Dispatchers who do not receive holiday time off will instead be compensated for each official county holiday by receiving an additional eight (8) hours of pay at their regular straight-time hourly rate. Additional pay is included in the employee's paycheck for the pay period in which the holiday occurred. This additional pay is received regardless of whether the employee worked on the holiday.

A paid holiday is not considered as time worked for the purposes of determining when an employee has reached his or her maximum allowable hours (40 hours per work week for non-law enforcement personnel; 86 hours per 14-day work period for law enforcement and detention officers).

If an official holiday falls within a regular employee's paid absence (e.g. vacation, sick leave), holiday pay is provided instead of the paid time off benefit that would otherwise have been applied.

Employees absent without approved leave on the workday immediately preceding and/or following a holiday will not be paid for the holiday.

2B-10 JURY DUTY

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

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

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

2B-11 CIVIC DUTY - VOTING

Employees are entitled to civil leave for the purpose of voting.

When an employee has fulfilled the reason for the civil leave, he or she must report to the County for duty for the remainder of the workday.

2B-12 BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

All employees shall be allowed up to 5 days of leave with pay for a death in the immediate family. For purposes of this policy, immediate family shall include the employee's spouse, child (including step, adopted, or foster), grandchild (including step-grandchild), mother, mother-in-law, father, father-in-law (including step-parents), sister, sister-in-law, brother, brother-in-law (including step-brothers and sisters), son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandparent (including step-grandparents) or great-grandparents (including step-great grandparents). On the death of another relative, not listed above, pay is received only for the day of burial if it falls on a regularly scheduled working day. Employees, contingent upon office holder's approval, may also be allowed to take up to (4) four hours off with pay to attend a funeral, if the funeral takes place during regular work hours. If leave is needed beyond the limits set in this policy, it may be charged to available vacation or compensatory time or to leave without pay.

2B-13 MILITARY LEAVE

All Gonzales County employees who are members of the National Guard or active reserve components of the United States Armed Forces shall be allowed up to fifteen (15) days off per federal fiscal year with pay for active duty or to attend active or inactive authorized training sessions and exercises. The fifteen (15) day paid military leave shall apply to the Federal Fiscal year and any unused balance at the end of the year shall not be carried forward into the next Federal Fiscal year. Pay for attendance at Reserve or National Guard training sessions or exercises shall be authorized only for periods which fall within the employee's normal work schedule. An employee may use vacation leave, compensatory time, or leave without pay if they must attend Reserve or National Guard Training sessions or exercises more than the fifteen-day maximum.

Any Gonzales County employee who is a member of the Texas military forces, a reserve component of the armed forces, or a member of a state or federally authorized urban search and rescue team called to state active duty by the governor or another appropriate authority in response to a disaster is entitled up to 7 days of paid disaster leave per fiscal year. This leave is in addition to the paid leave provided for authorized training or duty otherwise authorized or ordered. During disaster leave under these provisions, the person may not be subjected to loss of time, efficiency rating, personal time, sick leave, or vacation time.

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

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

Gonzales County employees who leave their positions because of being called to active military service or who voluntarily enter the Armed Forces of the United States shall be eligible for re-employment in accordance with state and federal laws in effect at the time of their release from duty.

2B-14 PAID QUARANTINE LEAVE

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

"Detention officer" means an individual appointed or employed by a county as a county jailer or other individual responsible for the care and custody of individuals incarcerated in a county jail.

"Emergency medical technician" means an individual who is certified as an emergency medical technician under Chapter 773, Health and Safety Code; and employed by the county.

"Fire fighter" means a paid employee of a municipal fire department or emergency services district who holds a position that requires substantial knowledge of firefighting; has met the requirements for certification by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection under Chapter 419, Government Code; and performs a function listed in Section 143.003(4)(A).

"Health authority" has the meaning assigned by Section 121.021, Health and Safety Code. A health authority is a physician appointed under the provisions of Chapter 121 to administer state and local laws relating to public health within the appointing body's jurisdiction. A health authority must be a competent physician with a reputable professional standing who is legally qualified to practice medicine in the state and a resident of the state. They must take an official oath and file with the department.

For counties that do not establish a local health department or public health district, they may appoint a physician as health authority to administer state and local laws relating to public health in the county's jurisdiction.

"Peace officer" means an individual described by Article 2.12, Code of Criminal Procedure, who is elected for, employed by, or appointed by the county.

Eligible employees who are on qualifying paid quarantine leave shall receive all employment benefits and compensation, including leave accrual, retirement, and health benefits for the duration of the leave; and, if applicable, shall be reimbursed for reasonable costs related to the quarantine, including lodging, medical, and transportation. An employee on qualifying paid quarantine leave will not have their leave balances reduced.

Off duty exposure will not be covered under this policy.

2B-15 RETIREMENT

All regular employees (full time, part time, and regular variable hour) shall be eligible for the retirement benefit offered through the Texas County and District Retirement System. Temporary seasonal and temporary short-term part-time employees will not be eligible for retirement benefits. Eligible employees shall make contributions to the retirement program through a system of payroll deduction. Gonzales County shall contribute to each eligible employee's retirement account according to the requirements of TCDRS. Information on the retirement program may be obtained at the County Human Resource Office during the normal working hours for that office.

2B-16 MEDICAL INSURANCE FOR RETIRED PERSONNEL

ELIGIBILITY 1. Eligible retired employees and officials of Gonzales County shall be entitled to health insurance coverage under the County of Gonzales group medical coverage policy. The eligible employee or official will be entitled to coverage beginning in the month following the term of service as set out under paragraph 2 and continuing until the last month before the employee is eligible for and covered by Medicare coverage under federal law.

COVERAGE FOR EMPLOYEES AND OFFICIALS 2. Employees and Officials utilizing the benefit under paragraph 1 above must meet the requirement of the rule of 80. The Rule of 80 means that your years

of service with Gonzales County and your age equal 80. Eligible employees must file for a bona fide retirement (receive a monthly retirement check) through TCDRS (Texas County and District Retirement System) to be eligible for this benefit. If you take a lump sum distribution you will not be allowed to participate in the coverage. If retirement is applied for with your service with Gonzales County and your age equaling 80 the retiree shall remain on the County's health insurance policy and the County will pay 100% of the monthly premium until the retiree is eligible for Medicare.

Officials that had Gonzales County employment as an employee, full time, before becoming an official will be included in time served for the Retiree Medical Benefit.

In the event a retiree, being covered under Paragraph 2 above, accepts employment that provides medical insurance coverage, the retiree shall be dropped from the County of Gonzales health insurance plan, including if applicable the Silver Choice Plan, at the end of the last month prior to receiving the medical coverage obtained as part of their new employment.

2B-17 SOCIAL SECURITY/MEDICARE

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

2B-18 FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT/MILITARY FAMILY LEAVE (FMLA/MFL)

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

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

ELIGIBILITY:

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

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

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

QUALIFYING EVENTS:

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

- 1) the birth of a child and to care for that child;
- 2) the placement of a child in the employee's home for adoption or foster care;
- 3) to care for a spouse, child (under the age of 18 or if over 18 incapable of self-care due to a disability), or parent with a serious health condition;

- 4) the serious health condition of the employee that make the employee unable to perform the essential functions of their job;
- 5) a qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that an employee's spouse, child, or parent is a covered military member of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve or National Guard), deployed to a foreign country or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty in a foreign country;
- 6) to care for a covered service member (Regular, Reserve or National Guard) with a serious injury or illness if the employee is the spouse, child, parent or next of kin (nearest blood relative) of the service member; or
- 7) to care for a covered veteran who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, for a serious injury or illness and who was a member of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve or National Guard) at any time during the period of 5 years preceding the date on which the veteran began that medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy.

SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITION:

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

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

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

QUALIFYING EXIGENCY LEAVE:

An eligible employee may be entitled to use up to 12 weeks of their FMLA leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Leave may be used if the employee's spouse, child of any age or parent in the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserves or National Guard) is on active duty or called to active-duty status in a foreign country.

Qualifying exigencies may include:

- 1) short-notice deployment (up to seven days of leave);
- 2) attending certain military events and related activities;
- 3) arranging for alternative childcare;
- 4) addressing certain financial and legal arrangements;

- 5) periods of rest and recuperation for the covered military member (up to fifteen days of leave);
- 6) attending certain counseling sessions;
- 7) attending post-deployment activities (available for up to 90 days after the termination of the covered military member's active-duty status);
- 8) other activities arising out of the covered military member's active duty or call to active duty in a foreign country and agreed upon by the county and the employee;
- 9) attending family support or assistance programs and informational briefings;
- 10) acting as the covered military member's representative before a governmental agency;
- 11) addressing issues that arise from the death of a covered military member while on active-duty status in a foreign country; and
- 12) other activities arising out of the covered military member's active duty or call to active duty in a foreign country and agreed upon by the county and employee.

LENGTH OF LEAVE:

An employee may use up to 12 weeks leave per 12-month period under this policy. Gonzales County sets the 12-month period used under this policy as a "rolling" 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee uses FMLA leave.

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

MILITARY CAREGIVER LEAVE:

An eligible employee may take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. A covered service member is either a current member or veteran of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve or National Guard).

An eligible employee may take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve, or National Guard) who has been rendered medically unfit to perform their duties due to a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty while on active duty for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

An eligible employee may take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a veteran (Regular, Reserve, or National Guard) who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness and who was a member of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve or National Guard) at any time during the period of five years preceding the date on which the veteran undergoes that medical treatment, recuperation or therapy.

The MFL entitlement is applied on a per-injury basis and an eligible employee may be entitled to take more than one period of 26 weeks of leave if the leave is to care for different covered service members or covered veteran with a subsequent serious illness or injury, except that no more than 26 weeks may be taken within any single 12-month period.

An eligible employee may begin taking military caregiver leave up to five years after their family member was discharged or released from the military. The eligible employee's first date of leave must be within the five-year period; however, the employee may continue to take such leave throughout the single 12-month period that is applicable to military caregiver leave, even if the leave extends beyond the five-year period.

An employee does not need to use this leave entitlement in one block. Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the county's operations.

WORK RELATED INJURY:

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

SUBSTITUTION OF PAID LEAVE:

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

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

CONTINUED EMPLOYEE BENEFITS:

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

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

INTERMITTENT LEAVE AND REDUCED SCHEDULE:

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

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

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

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

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

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

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

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

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

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

REQUESTING LEAVE:

Unless FMLA leave is unforeseeable, an employee is required to submit a written request for leave under this policy to their immediate supervisor.

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

REINSTATEMENT:

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

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

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

REPAYMENT OF BENEFITS:

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

OTHER BENEFITS:

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

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

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

REGULATION:

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

RETURN-TO-WORK:

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

ENFORCEMENT:

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

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Gonzales County will post the current FMLA poster as provided by the department of labor. If an employee asks for FMLA leave for any reason, Gonzales County will respond in writing and will use the FMLA forms (WH-381) Notice of Eligibility and Rights and Responsibility and form (WH-382) Designation Notice to notify the employee of their eligibility rights.

2B-19 LEAVE OF ABSENCE - OTHER

Employees may request a personal leave of absence for a maximum of 30 days. Personal leave of absence may include reasons such as extended vacations, continuing education, extended bereavement, or other personal matters. Personal leaves of absence are granted solely at the discretion of the elected official, appointed official or department head.

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

2B-20 LAYOFFS

While such action is avoided whenever possible, employees of Gonzales County may be laid off where a department head deems it necessary because of shortages of funds or work, the abolition of a job or jobs, other material changes in the organization or for other reasons which are beyond the control of the County. A layoff shall not reflect discredit an employee or on his/her ability to do the job in which he/she was employed. Whenever possible, employees who are laid off in one department shall be integrated into another department by transfer.

In the event layoffs are required, the employees to be laid off shall be selected by the department head. Selection for continued employment shall be based first on demonstrated job performance and efficiency and, secondly, on length of service. Laid off employees are encouraged to apply for new openings with Gonzales County and will receive due consideration upon application, however, previous employment shall not constitute any right or preference in the selection process for future employment.

JOB POSTING POLICY

A. JOB POSTINGS

3A-1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

A. POLICY STATEMENT. It is the policy of County of Gonzales (the “County”) to promote internal career development opportunities and to ensure fair access to employment opportunities for all qualified candidates. To achieve these objectives, the County requires that all departments post job openings for a minimum period before filling any position or removing the posting from circulation.

B. APPLICABILITY. This policy applies to all departments. It governs the posting of all employment opportunities, including full-time, part-time, temporary, and contract positions, except as expressly excluded under Article II, Section III of this policy.

C. COMPLIANCE OBLIGATION. All managers, supervisors, human resources personnel, and other employees involved in the recruitment and hiring process shall comply with the requirements set forth in this policy. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

3A-2 DEFINITIONS

A. “Job Posting” means any written notice, advertisement, or announcement of an employment opportunity with the County, including the position title, general duties, qualifications, and instructions for applying.

B. “Posting Period” means the minimum seven (7) consecutive calendar day period during which a Job Posting must remain publicly accessible before the position may be filled or the posting removed.

C. “Exempt Positions” means positions excluded from the mandatory posting requirements under this policy, including:

- a. **Temporary emergency replacements.** Positions filled on a temporary basis due to unforeseeable operational emergencies requiring immediate staffing, provided that any permanent appointment to the same position shall be subject to the full Posting Period requirement.
- b. **Internal transfers at the same grade.** Lateral transfers of current employees to positions at the same job grade or level without a change in compensation or material change in responsibilities, when such transfer is initiated by mutual agreement between the employee and management.
- c. **Reorganizations and redeployments.** Positions filled as part of a County-wide or department-wide reorganization in which affected employees are redeployed to comparable roles.

D. “Authorized Posting Method” means any of the three posting methods approved under Article C of this policy: website posting, newspaper publication, or courthouse posting.

3A-3 Minimum Posting Period and Authorized Methods

A. Seven-Day Minimum Posting Requirement. Every Job Posting subject to this policy must remain accessible to potential applicants through at least one Authorized Posting Method for a minimum of seven (7) consecutive days before the position may be filled or the posting withdrawn.

- a. Calculation of Posting Period.** The Posting Period begins on the date the Job Posting first becomes publicly accessible through an Authorized Posting Method and ends at 11:59 p.m. Central Time on the seventh calendar day Thereafter.
- b. No premature removal.** No Job Posting may be removed, withdrawn, or otherwise made inaccessible before the expiration of the full seven-day Posting Period, except as provided in Section 3A-4 Part B.
- c. Extension permitted.** Departments may, in their discretion, maintain Job Postings for periods longer than seven days. Extended posting periods do not alter the minimum requirement for subsequent postings.

B. Authorized Posting Methods. Departments must use at least one of the following three methods to satisfy the posting requirement under this policy:

a. Website Posting.

i. County website. Job Postings may be published on the County’s official careers or employment webpage, accessible to the general public without requiring login credentials or payment.

ii. Frequency of publication. The Job Posting must appear in print on at least one date during the Posting Period. If the newspaper publishes less frequently than daily, the Job Posting must appear in the first available edition and remain on file or accessible online (if the newspaper maintains a digital edition) for the full seven-day period.

iii. Content requirements. Newspaper postings must include the position title, a brief summary of duties, minimum qualifications, and instructions for submitting an application or contacting the County.

c. Courthouse Posting.

i. Authorized locations. Job Postings may be physically posted at the Gonzales County Courthouse, in a location designated for public notices

or employment postings, subject to the rules and policies of the Courthouse Administrator.

ii. **Posting format.** Courthouse postings must be printed on [8.5" x 11" OR 8.5" x 14"] paper in a font size of at least [12-POINT], and must be Affixed in a manner that prevents removal or defacement during the Posting Period.

iii. **Documentation.** The department responsible for the posting shall retain a date-stamped copy of the Job Posting, a photograph of the posted notice, or other documentation evidencing the date of posting and location, in accordance with Article V, Section II.

C. Use of Multiple Methods. Departments may, but are not required to, use more than one Authorized Posting Method simultaneously. Use of multiple methods does not reduce the seven-day minimum requirement but may broaden the applicant pool and promote equal opportunity.

D. Posting Content Requirements. Regardless of the Authorized Posting Method selected, each Job Posting must include:

- a. Position title and department or business unit.
- b. Summary of essential duties and responsibilities.
- c. Minimum qualifications, including education, experience, licenses, or certifications required.
- d. Instructions for submitting an application, including deadlines, contact information, or web links.
- e. Equal employment opportunity statement in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local laws.
- f. Date the posting was first made available and the anticipated deadline for applications (if applicable).

3A-4 Procedures for Posting and Removal

A. Initiation of Job Posting.

- a. **Department responsibility.** The hiring manager or department head shall initiate the Job Posting process by notifying the Human Resources Department.
- b. **Selection of posting method.** The hiring department shall select at least one Authorized Posting Method.

B. Early Removal for Cause.

- a. Permitted grounds.** A Job Posting may be removed before the expiration of the seven-day Posting Period only under the following circumstances:
 - i. Position elimination.** The position has been eliminated due to budget cuts, reorganization, or change in business needs.
 - ii. Posting error.** The Job Posting contains a material error (e.g., incorrect salary range, inaccurate qualifications, or misleading job title) that cannot be corrected without republishing the posting.
 - iii. Legal or compliance issue.** The posting is found to violate applicable employment laws or County policy and must be withdrawn immediately.
- b. Approval required.** Any early removal must be approved in writing by the Human Resources Department before the posting is withdrawn.
- c. Reposting requirement.** If a Job Posting is removed for posting error or legal/compliance issues and the position remains open, a corrected posting must be published and must remain accessible for a full seven-day Posting Period before the position may be filled.

C. Removal After Posting Period.

- a. Discretionary Removal.** After the expiration of the seven-day Posting Period, the department may remove the Job Posting at any time, whether or not the position has been filled.
- b. Continued posting.** Departments are encouraged to leave postings accessible until a candidate has accepted an offer of employment, in order to maintain a robust applicant pool and promote transparency.

3A-5 Relationship to Other Policies

A. Equal Employment Opportunity. This policy is intended to complement and support the County's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to limit the County's commitment to recruiting, hiring, and promoting employees without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local law.

B. Internal Promotion and Transfer. This policy does not guarantee that any position will be filled by an internal candidate, nor does it create any contractual right to promotion or transfer. All hiring decisions remain within the sole discretion of the County and shall be based on qualifications, performance, and business needs.

C. At-Will Employment. This policy does not alter the at-will nature of employment with the County. Either the employee or the County may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause and with or without notice, subject to applicable law.

3A-6 Effective Date and Amendment

A. Effective Date. This Job Posting Policy shall be effective as of July 13th, 2026 and shall apply to all Job Postings initiated on or after that date.

B. Amendment. The County reserves the right to modify, amend, or rescind this policy at any time, with or without notice, in its sole discretion. Any amendments shall be communicated to employees through their county issued e-mail.

C. Superseding Effect. This policy supersedes any prior written or unwritten policies, practices, or understandings regarding job posting requirements.

Job Posting Policy approved by Gonzales County Commissioner's Court on July 13th, 2026.

Conference/Training Travel Expense Claim Form

Gonzales County, Texas

Claimant's Name:	Date Submitted:	Department:
Name of Conference/Meeting:	Destination:	Date(s) of Conference/Meeting:

1 Meals		
☐ Over Night Travel - Per Diem		
Departure (Date & Time):	Return (Date & Time):	Est. Travel Time (one way)
☐ Advance Per Diem Request (paid before travel)		\$36 x 2=First & last day of travel
☐ Adjustment on Advance Per Diem = or - Days		\$60 Per full day out of county
		\$0 Total
☐ Standard Non-Over Night Travel -		
NON STANDARD NON-OVERNIGHT MAY BE CLAIMED ON SEPARATE FORM.		
Departure (Date/Time):	Return (Date/Time):	Amount
		\$
		\$
		\$
		\$
		\$
TOTAL MEALS:		\$0.00

2 Transportation	
☐ Vehicle	☐ Amount from Appendix H of Travel Policy MILEAGE WILL NOT BE PAID IN ADVANCE
	Current mileage can be found at http://www.window.state.tx.us/comptrol/texastra.html
	or
☐ Actual Mileage	Justification on back of this form must be completed.
☐ Other (airplane, county vehicle expense, taxi, parking,...) see policy for receipt requirement	
TOTAL TRANSPORTATION:	
\$0.00	

3 Hotel	
☐ Hotel	
TOTAL HOTEL:	
\$	

4 Other Expenses	
☐ Other Expenses (please add explanation below and attach receipts (e.g. registration costs))	
TOTAL OTHER:	
\$	

AMOUNT TO BE REIMBURSED

TOTAL OF ITEMS 1-4:

\$0.00

Copy of registration with agenda must be attached.

Invoices/receipts attached as necessary (transportation, hotel, etc.)

I certify that this claim is true and all expenses were incurred on approved county business:	Reviewed and Approved by Elected Official/Department Head:
	(fund -dept-account)
Claimant's Signature	Department Head Signature
	Date

Effective 5.22.23

GONZALES COUNTY REQUEST FOR MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT

EMPLOYEE _____		DEPARTMENT _____		
DATE	DESTINATION/PURPOSE	BEGINNING ODOMETER	ENDING ODOMETER	TOTAL MILEAGE

**TOTAL
MILEAGE** 0

Current mileage rate can be found at <http://www.window.state.tx.us/comptrol/texastra.html>

X \$0.70

TOTAL \$0.00

ACCOUNT NUMBER TO BE CHARGED: _____

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE STATEMENT OF MILEAGE FOR REIMBURSEMENT WAS FOR A
COUNTY PURPOSE AND IS TRUE AND CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

GONZALES COUNTY REQUEST FOR PAYMENT

DATE:	_____
DEPARTMENT:	_____ _____
MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO:	_____ _____
ADDRESS:	_____ _____ _____
AMOUNT:	_____
REASON FOR PAYMENT:	_____ _____ _____
COMMENTS:	_____ _____
ACCOUNT NUMBER TO BE CHARGED:	_____ _____
APPROVED BY:	_____ _____

**GONZALES COUNTY SICK LEAVE POOL
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Membership in the Gonzales County Sick Leave Pool is available to all regular full-time employees who accrue sick leave benefits and have been employed for at least twelve (12) months.

I have read the rules and guidelines in the Gonzales County Sick Leave Pool Policy concerning the Sick Leave Pool and desire to become a member by donating one (1) to five (5) sick leave days to the pool.

I understand that these days, one donated to the Sick Leave Pool for membership, will be subtracted from my available sick leave days. All donations to the Sick Leave Pool become the property of the Sick Leave Pool and cannot be returned even upon cancellation of membership.

My authorization to deduct days from my accumulated sick leave is verified by my signature below.

Employee: _____ Department: _____
(Print Full Name)

Number of days to be donated: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

I have read the above information concerning the County's Sick Leave Pool and I do not wish to become a member.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Department: _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

**GONZALES COUNTY
APPLICATION FOR SICK POOL DAYS**

Name: _____ SSN #: _____

Department: _____ Position: _____

First date absent from this illness: _____

Date returned to work or expected to return: _____

Number of days absent for this illness: _____

The above days requested are needed due to illness/injury described below:

Signature of Employee or Family Member

Date

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE POOL ADMINISTRATOR

**GONZALES COUNTY SICK LEAVE POOL
APPLICATION FOR SICK DAYS
COMMITTEE DECISION FORM**

Name of Applicant: _____

Position: _____ Department: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Date Lost Time Began: _____ Date Of Request: _____

Number of Days Requested from Pool: _____

Request Approved by Committee: _____ Yes _____ No

Reason Request Denied:

Signature of Committee Member/Date

Signature of Committee Member/Date:

Signature of Committee Member/Date

Signature of Committee Member/Date

Signature of Committee Member/Date

Received by Pool Administrator: _____

Signature of Pool Administrator: _____

Processed in Payroll on: _____

Signature of Payroll Clerk: _____