

**HANSFORD COUNTY
PERSONNEL POLICY
HANDBOOK**

I acknowledge that I received a copy of the County Personnel Handbook on
the _____ day of _____, 20____.

Employee

EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

EMPLOYEE STATEMENT:

I understand that I am an "AT WILL" employee and my employment may be
ended at any time with or without cause. I further understand that the decision
of _____

_____ is final and is not subject to review by
any other official or body.

The office hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with one hour off for lunch. I agree to
work no more than 40 hours per week unless authorized by

_____.

Finally, I understand and agree that no term or condition of my employment
is to be considered as
a contract.

Employee's signature

Employee's Printed Name

Date

Witness:

HANSFORD COUNTY, TEXAS
REVISED PERSONNEL HANDBOOK

Adopted by
Hansford County
Commissioner's Court

As of

Revision Number	Tab No.	Date of Revision	Date Handbook Updated	Employee Initials	Supervisor Review
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DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVES

1. DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTIVES

These personnel policies for Hansford County have been developed to provide a better understanding of the relationship between Hansford County and its employees. This is done by:

- A. Defining the rights and privileges enjoyed by county employees;
- B. Stating the rules and regulations that apply to county employees;
- C. Outlining the expectations the county has of its employees;

Each of these policies and parts of policies are intended to stand independently. Therefore, if any policy or part of a policy becomes invalid because of federal or state law or other authority, it shall not affect the validity or application of other policies or parts of policies.

From time to time, it may be necessary to make changes in these policies as a result of changes in Hansford County or its programs. **The county has the right to modify this policy manual at any time, with or without notice.**

You should be aware that your employment and compensation may be terminated with or without cause, and with or without notice at any time at the option of Hansford County. The terms and conditions of your employment may be changed with or without cause, and with or without notice, at any time.

No policy described in this policy manual is to be interpreted as constituting the terms of an employment contract. The policy manual is not a contract. It is intended to provide information. Employment is "at will".

The purpose of these policies is to serve the needs of both the employees and Hansford County to the mutual benefit of both. Any employee who has a question concerning any of Hansford County's personnel policies is encouraged to discuss it with his or her supervisor.

Whether you are a new employee or an experienced employee, the policy manual will serve you as a reference to public service in Hansford County, with facts about your many employee benefits. You should keep the manual handy for permanent reference.

As a county employee, you have a responsibility to the citizens of Hansford County. How well you do your work and how you conduct yourself on the job are both subject to public approval. Often, your contact with citizens will be the only basis on which the county government is judged. Therefore, you owe it to both the county and yourself to serve the public to the best of your ability. The county has proven to be a good place to work, but it is up to each individual employee to maintain their position as a result of good performance, proper attitude, and responsible action for the tax dollars.

CODE OF ETHICS

2. CODE OF ETHICS

As a Hansford County employee:

I will maintain the highest standards of professional conduct on the job and will refrain from those actions that could bring county government into disrespect or be grounds for dismissal.

I will be receptive to and accept training and educational opportunities to improve myself and not wait until it is required.

I will represent the county government in a professional manner, even during my off-duty hours.

I will be an advocate for good county government in all situations where I have the opportunity.

I will accept responsibility and be accountable for all my actions as they affect the operation of county government.

I will maintain in confidence all "non-public" information I receive concerning county business and will disclose the same only for such official purposes as may be directed by a court of competent jurisdiction or by my supervisor.

I will work to create an atmosphere that will convey to county residents pride in my work and responsibility for my actions.

I will not purchase personal items using the County's Tax-Exempt status.

**EQUAL
EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITY**

3. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

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

Reasonable accommodation that does not cause undue hardship to the county shall be made for otherwise qualified disabled individuals to afford them the same opportunities for election and all conditions and privileges of employment as non-handicapped applicants and employees.

Determination of reasonable accommodation shall be made after consultation with the prospective employee, supervisor, and/or organizations with special experience and/or knowledge appropriate to properly assess the impact of a handicap on the prospective employee's ability to perform the job assignment.

EMPLOYEE HIRING PRACTICES AND CLASSIFICATIONS

4. EMPLOYEE HIRING PRACTICES AND CLASSIFICATIONS

The following "employment" classifications are created:

Elected Officials: Anyone who has been elected solely by the voters of Hansford County and qualified to hold a county-wide or precinct office of Hansford County, or who has been appointed and qualified to fill the unexpired term of an elected official. All Policies must be adopted by each elected official within their office.

Full-time Employee: Anyone who has been employed by an elected official or a department head to fill a salaried position approved by the commissioner's court, has completed all necessary information to be established on the payroll, has satisfactorily performed their job assignments, and is regularly scheduled to work a minimum of forty (40) hours per week.

Part-time Employee: Anyone who has been employed by an elected official or a department head that has a normal work schedule of less than thirty (30) hours per week or is paid on an hourly basis and has satisfactorily performed their job assignments.

Temporary Employee: Anyone who has been employed by an elected official or department head on a salaried or hourly basis for position that is established for a specific period of time or until a specific period of time or until a specific project is completed. No employee shall have an employment contract for a specific or indefinite period of time unless the contract is approved in writing by the commissioners' court. Temporary employees are not eligible for benefits.

Court approval is not required before an elected official or department head may fill a budgeted position caused by an employee's separation from the county. In most cases, the Commissioners Court's approval of the prospective employee is required before they can assume the duties of office. Additionally, because the Commissioners Court may elect not to approve a salary line item for a particular position in future fiscal years, notice of an intent to fill a vacant position should be given to the Commissioners Court in an open meeting of the Commissioners Court. Commissioners Court approval of the proposed employee must be obtained before filling any vacant position.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

5. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

An employee of Hansford County shall not engage in any employment, relationship, or activity that would affect the employee's job efficiency or that would reduce the employee's ability to make objective decisions in regard to the employee's work and responsibility as a Hansford County employee.

Activities which constitute a conflict of interest under this policy 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 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 the employee's independence or judgment in the performance of duties for the county;
4. Making any personal investment that might reasonably be expected to create substantial conflict between the employee's private interest and duties for the county.
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.

6.

POLICY ON PAY

PERIODS

6. POLICY ON PAY PERIODS

PAY PERIOD

1. The pay period for Hansford County shall begin on the first day of each month and end on the last day of the same month.

2. If payday falls on a holiday or a weekend, paychecks shall be issued, or directly deposited on the last workday immediately preceding the holiday or weekend. Payday is the last working day of the month.

SALARY ADVANCES

3. Salary advances shall not be made to any employee for any reason.

7. MINIMUM WAGE, OVERTIME PAY AND COMPENSATORY TIME

7a.LONGEVITY

7. MINIMUM WAGE, OVERTIME PAY AND COMPENSATORY TIME

1. **FLSA compliance:** In administering its wage and salary program, the minimum standards of Hansford County shall be the basic standards set forth in the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and its amendments as it applies to Hansford County.

2. **Applicability:** This policy shall apply to all employees of Hansford County who are not specifically exempt from the provisions of the FLSA.

3. **Overtime:** In calculating "hours worked" for the purpose of overtime computation, hours worked shall include only hours spent in the service of Hansford County (as defined in the FLSA) and, in addition thereto, shall exclude all paid leave. Working through lunch for the purpose of gaining overtime **will not be permitted.**

Overtime shall be all hours actually worked at the job site in excess of FLSA requirements. A forty (40) hour workweek is expected of all employees, except those exempted by the 207K

Overtime is not measured by the day, but by the week. All overtime must be authorized by the supervisor.

When reporting time on the time sheet, time begins when the employee is at the workplace. **Travel to and from work is not compensable.** Time spent actually performing work during travel is compensable.

4. **Overtime compensation:** A non-exempt employee who works overtime during a workweek shall:

5. Be given compensatory time at a rate of one and one-half (1 1/2) hours compensatory time for each hour worked over forty (40) during the workweek.

EXCEPT precinct roadmen pushing snow or paving overtime shall be paid, and it is the responsibility of the foreman to accurately and timely provide this information on a time sheet and turn it in to the Treasurer. **ALSO,** the Hansford County Sheriff's Department jailers/dispatchers shall receive overtime pay when staff is short-handed. "Short-handed" is defined as having 5 or fewer fully trained employees, and it is the responsibility of the Sheriff to

notify the Treasurer of the shortage, as well as when the jailers/dispatchers are fully staffed.

Use of compensatory time shall be made, when possible, given the needs of the County, within sixty days in which it was accrued. Use of compensatory time shall be subject to approval by the department head or elected official.

When an employee has reached the maximum compensatory time accrual (240 hours or 480 hours for law enforcement), his/her shall be compensated in wages at a rate of one and one-half (1 1/2) times his/her regular rate for any additional overtime hours worked.

If an individual's employment terminates before all of his/her earned compensatory time is used, he/she will be paid for unused time at his/her regular compensatory rate on his/her final paycheck.

6. Employees of the Hansford County Sheriff's Department shall be paid for each hour worked in excess of that permitted by FLSA one and one-half (1 1/2) their computed hourly wage or be given 1 1/2 compensatory time off beginning Oct. 1997.

7. **Record keeping:** Each employee shall be responsible for recording any compensatory time taken within a pay period on the time sheet for that pay period.

a. Department Heads must absorb the payment of any overtime/compensatory time (employee resignation) within their budget, before starting a new employee, unless prior approval from the Commissioners' Court is granted.

b. Department Heads will be required to appear before the Commissioners' Court to justify the excess if the maximum cap is exceeded.

Employees may check their current compensatory time balance at the treasurer's office at any time during normal working hours. A current report will be provided with the monthly Department Reports.

7a.
LONGEVITY PAY

All elected officials, full-time, shared employees, and all individuals who receive a salary supplement from Hansford County shall receive longevity pay at the rate of \$5.00 per month for each year of continuous employment. Longevity terminates when employment is terminated. Longevity pay is added to wages in OCTOBER of each year. Longevity Pay will be based on action by the commissioners' court during the budget process.

This policy is subject to review or change annually.

8.

**HOURS OF WORK,
WORKDAY AND
WORK WEEK**

8. POLICY ON HOURS OF WORK, WORKDAY AND WORKWEEK

HOURS OF WORK: 1. The normal hours of work for Hansford County shall be from 8:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m.

2. The normal days of work shall be Monday through Friday except for official holidays.

EXCEPTIONS: 3. In order to meet the needs of the County, certain departments or employees may be required to work a schedule that varies from the normal work schedule of the County or they may be subject to call in case of emergency or special need.

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

WORKDAY: 5. A workday for the County shall be defined as the period beginning at midnight and ending exactly 24 consecutive hours later.

WORKWEEK: 6. For purposes of record keeping and compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), a workweek for Hansford County shall be defined as the period beginning at midnight each Friday and ending seven consecutive 24-hour periods later (168 hours). The work week will comply with the 207K Rule.

9.

PAYROLL RECORDS

9. PAYROLL RECORDS

Time sheets: Each employee shall be required to keep an accurate time sheet each week, which shows all hours worked and requests for paid leave used. **The Time Sheets will reflect to the nearest five (5) minutes.**

On the last normal working day of each month, each employee shall be required to sign his or her completed time sheet and turn it in to his and her supervisor. An hourly employee shall be paid only for hours reflected on their time sheets, which have been delivered to the Treasurer's office before payroll is calculated. Hours appearing on time sheets filed after payroll is calculated will be paid during the next pay period.

When the supervisor receives the time sheets from his and her employees, the supervisor shall review all the time sheets for competency and accuracy and make any corrections, with the knowledge of the employee involved, which are necessary.

All non-elected personnel, not required by the provision of this manual to maintain time sheets, shall certify their use of vacation days, sick days, and funeral days on a form, as contained herein, to be supplied by the Hansford County Treasurer. The form shall be submitted to the Treasurer not later than the last working day of any month in which vacation days, sick days, or funeral days are used.

When the supervisor finishes reviewing the time sheets, he/she shall sign them and submit them to the treasurer on the first working day following the close of the month.

The treasurer shall be required to keep copies of all-time sheets and other payroll records for a minimum of three (3) years.

10.

**EMPLOYEE
ATTENDANCE AND
TIMELINESS**

10. EMPLOYEE ATTENDANCE AND TIMELINESS

1. Attendance: Each employee shall report for work on each weekday unless prior approval is given by the employee's supervisor or the employee is unable to report for work due to circumstances beyond the control of the employee.

2. Tardiness: Each employee shall be at his and her place of work in accordance with the starting time established for his and her position unless prior approval is given by the supervisor or the employee is unable to be at work on time for reasons beyond the control of the employee.

Each employee shall remain on the job until the normal quitting time for his and her job unless permission to leave early is given by the employee's supervisor.

3. Notification: If an employee is tardy or absent without prior approval, the employee shall be responsible for notifying his and her supervisor as soon as is practical of the circumstances causing the tardiness or absence.

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

11.

BREAKS

11. BREAKS

While there is no specific provision that allows employees to be away from their duty station during work hours, Hansford County understands that there are times when it is advantageous for employees to take a short break from their duties. These breaks should be kept to an absolute minimum in terms of frequency (one A.M. and one P.M. break is recommended) and duration (5 to 10 minutes is recommended), and may be taken only with the specific consent of the department head. During a break, the employee should not leave the premises, and at no time shall the employee's duty station be left unattended.

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. Hansford County supports the practice of expressing breast milk.

Hansford County will provide reasonable [paid or unpaid] 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.

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

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.

12.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT AND ACTIVITIES

12. OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT AND ACTIVITIES

An employee of Hansford County shall not engage in any activity or other employment that will adversely affect his or her ability to effectively carry out the duties and responsibilities of his or her job.

An employee accepting other employment while still employed by Hansford County shall notify his and her supervisor before beginning such work, except in instances where the work may be occasional or casual.

13.

**POLITICAL
ACTIVITY**

13. POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Employees of Hansford County 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 a state or local official or employee to pay, lend, or contribute anything of value to a party committee, organization, agency, or person for a political reason.
3. Shall not use equipment for political activity.

14.

**USE OF TOBACCO
PRODUCTS AND
SMOKING**

14. SMOKING AND USE OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS

1. The use of tobacco products shall **NOT** be permitted in **ANY** area of the Courthouse, Annex, precinct barns, or the county Ag barns.
2. Employees who use tobacco products may take their normally allowed break so they may use the designated area.
3. Employees who use tobacco products must dispose of tobacco refuse in proper receptacles.
4. Employees that use any Vaping products are forbidden to be permitted in area of the Courthouse, precinct barns, the Ag barns, and museum.

15.

RESPONSIBILITY

FOR

PROPERTY

15. RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROPERTY

1. Assigned property: All Hansford County employees shall be responsible for the proper use and maintenance of all tools, equipment, including the employees' vehicles, used by or assigned to them. If it is found that used or assigned tools, equipment, or vehicles are intentionally or irresponsibly lost, damaged, or destroyed, the employee will be liable for replacing the lost, damaged, or destroyed tools, equipment, or vehicles at the employee's personal expense.

2. Driver's license: All employees who operate county vehicles shall have a valid state of Texas driver's license with appropriate and current vehicle endorsements necessary for that vehicle. Each county employee who is required to have a driver's license to operate vehicles shall immediately notify his/her supervisor of any changes in the status of that license.

Suspension or revocation of the driver's license of an employee who is required to operate a vehicle as a normal part of his/her job may result in a job change, demotion, or discharge.

3. Accident reporting: Employees operating county vehicles shall immediately report all accidents and property damage to his/her supervisor and to the proper law enforcement.

A copy of all accident and incident reports completed by an employee of the county or a law enforcement official shall be sent to the supervisor of the employee involved.

4. Responsibility for County Property: Personal use of any County property, materials, supplies, tools, equipment, or **vehicles** shall **not** be permitted. Under no circumstances will anyone not employed by Hansford County be authorized to operate a county-owned vehicle.

16. HOLIDAYS

16. HOLIDAYS

1. **Eligibility:** All regular full-time employees of Hansford County shall be eligible to receive a day off with pay for each official holiday.
2. **Holidays:** The official paid holidays for Hansford County shall be:

New Year's Day - January 1 or the first working day after.

Good Friday - Friday before Easter.

Memorial Day - The last Monday in May

Independence Day - July 4 or nearest working day.

Labor Day - The first Monday in September.

Veteran's Day - November 11 or nearest working day.

Thanksgiving Holidays - The fourth Thursday in November and the Friday that follows.

Christmas Holidays will be recognized as follows:

When Christmas falls on:

Monday	December 25th and 26th
Tuesday	December 24th and 25th
Wednesday	December 24th and 25th
Thursday	December 25th and 26th
Friday	December 24th and 25th
Saturday	December 23rd and 24th
Sunday	December 23rd and 26 th

3. **Work on a holiday:** If an employee's job requires His/her to work on an official holiday, the employee shall be paid for the day of work and the holiday (8 hours).
4. **Holiday on a day off:** If a holiday during the week occurs on an employee's regular day off, the employee shall, at the option of the department head, be given another day off with pay or be paid as if the holiday were worked without consideration for overtime.

Sheriff's office employees will need to write holiday on time sheet in order to get the Holiday pay.

5. **Holidays during leave of absence:** An employee who is on a leave of absence without pay shall not be paid for any official holidays occurring during such leave.

17.

VACATION

17. VACATION

1. **Eligibility:** All regular full-time employees of Hansford County shall be eligible for paid vacation leave.

2. **Accrual:** Hansford County full-time regular employees shall be entitled to one week of vacation time with pay **after** 6 months and one additional weeks at full year of employment, calculated from the first day of employment and two weeks for every year thereafter. Employees may not accumulate more than two weeks of vacation time.

After a total of 5 years of employment, an employee shall be entitled to three (3) weeks of vacation time and may accumulate not more than three (3) weeks of vacation time.

A record of all vacation time shall be made on each employee's time sheet.

3. **Maximum accrual:** An employee with less than 5 years of employment may not accumulate more than two work weeks of vacation time. An employee with 15 years of employment may accumulate not more than three work weeks of vacation time at any one time.

Accrual in excess of the maximum will not be allowed if the employee has compensatory time accrued.

Accrual in excess of the maximum may be allowed if:

1. The employee has no compensatory time, AND:
2. The employee is not able to take a vacation because of the documented needs of the county (e.g., staffing issues);
3. The employee's supervisor requests in writing that the employee be allowed vacation accrual above the maximum, documents the reason the employee was unable to take vacation, and submits an action plan to reduce the balance below the maximum; and,
4. The commissioner's court approves the request for vacation accrual in excess of the maximum.

An employee who has been allowed to accrue vacation in excess of the maximum shall promptly take vacation to reduce the balance to or below the maximum as soon as circumstances and needs of the County allow it, but not longer than 6 weeks after the employee's anniversary date. After the allotted 6 weeks, the employee will lose the excess vacation time.

4. **Holidays during vacation:** If a holiday falls during the period an employee is on vacation, the holiday shall be handled in accordance with the provisions of the policy on holidays and will not be charged against the employee's vacation balance.

5. **Illness during vacation:** If an employee becomes ill while taking vacation leave, the period of illness may be charged against the employee's sick leave balance and not vacation if:

The employee promptly notifies his/her supervisor of the illness.

The employee provides the supervisor with acceptable proof of the illness; and

The supervisor gives permission to charge the period of illness to sick leave.

6. **Vacation pay at termination:** Employees shall be paid for all unused vacation time at their regular rate upon termination of employment. Except that if an employee is terminated for just cause, then vacation pay will not be paid.

7. **Maximum available vacation:** The maximum amount of vacation an employee shall have available for use at any given time is the amount of unused vacation the employee has at the end of the previous month.

8. Compensatory hours shall be used before vacation hours as stated in point 5 of section 7 of the employee handbook.

18.

SICK LEAVE

18. SICK LEAVE

A. GENERAL POLICY

1. Eligibility: All full-time regular employees shall be eligible for paid sick leave.

2(A). Accrual: Full-time regular employees shall accrue one (1) day sick leave per month.

2(B). Annual Wellness Day: Full-time regular employees shall be entitled to one day each calendar year as a "wellness day". A wellness day is provided to enable employees to schedule annual physical, dental, eye exams, and other examinations or procedures as are reasonably calculated to promote the health and welfare of the employee. The annual "wellness day" shall not accrue and shall be forfeited if not used during any calendar year. The wellness day must be approved by the immediate supervisor, and proof of visit needs to be presented to the Treasurer.

3. Accumulation: Any unused sick leave at the end of the calendar year shall be carried over into the next calendar year.

4. Maximum accrual: The maximum accrual for sick leave will be sixty (60) working days.

5. Types of usage: Eligible employees may use accrued sick leave for absence from work due to:

Personal illness or physical or mental incapacity.

Medical, dental, or optical examinations or treatment.

Medical quarantine resulting from exposure to a contagious disease; or

Illness of a member of the employee's immediate family (spouse, child, mother, father, siblings, grandparents) who requires the employee's personal care and attention.

6. Notification of sick leave: An employee shall be responsible for notifying his/her supervisor as early as is practical on the first day of sick leave absence and request that approved sick leave be granted.

If more than one day of sick leave is needed, the employee shall be responsible for notifying his/her supervisor of the expected length of the absence on the first day of sick leave or shall be required to notify his/her supervisor on a daily basis for each day he/she is unable to come to work.

An employee shall be required to request prior approval from his/her supervisor for sick leave to be used for non-emergency medical, dental and optical appointments and annual wellness day.

7. Documentation: An employee's supervisor may request acceptable documentation of an employee's illness or injury where it is deemed necessary for approval of a sick leave request or wellness day.

8. New employees: An employee shall begin earning sick leave the first full month of his/her employment.

9. Maximum available: The maximum amount of sick leave that an employee will have available at any given time is the unused balance at the end of the preceding month.

10. Waiting period: There shall be no waiting period before an employee can use accrued sick leave.

11. Pay at termination: An employee shall not receive pay for any unused sick leave balance at the time of termination of employment.

19.

FUNERAL

LEAVE

19. FUNERAL LEAVE

Emergency leaves may be granted in the event of a death in the employee's family, which shall include **ONLY**: a father, mother, sister, brother, husband, wife, son, daughter, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, mother-in-law or father-in-law, grandchild, and grandparents.

All regular full-time employees shall be paid up to five (5) days for funeral leave.

20.

CIVIL

LEAVE

20. CIVIL LEAVE

1. Jury duty: All regular full-time employees shall receive their normal pay for the period they are called for jury duty, which includes both the jury selection process and, if selected, the time the employee spends serving on the jury.

Any fee paid for such service may be retained by the employee.

2. Official court attendance: All regular employees subpoenaed or requested to attend court to appear as a witness or to testify in some official capacity on behalf of Hansford County shall be entitled to leave with pay for such period as his/her court attendance may require.

Any fee paid for such service may be retained by the employee.

3. Private litigation: If an employee is absent from work to appear in private litigation in which the employee is a principal party, the time off shall be charged to vacation leave or leave without pay.

21.

MILITARY LEAVE

21. MILITARY LEAVE

1. Guard and Reserve: Regular Hansford 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 year with pay to attend authorized training sessions and exercises.

The fifteen-day paid military leave shall apply to the calendar year, and any unused balance at the end of the year shall not be carried forward into the next year.

Pay for attendance at reserve, or National Guard training sessions or exercises shall be authorized only for periods that fall within the employee's normal work schedule.

An employee may use annual vacation leave or leave without pay if he/she must attend reserve or National Guard training sessions or exercises in excess of the fifteen-day paid maximum.

2. Orders: An employee going on military leave shall provide his/her supervisor with a set of orders within three (3) days after receiving them. Supervisor shall provide the treasurer with a copy of orders as soon as he/she receive them.

3. Active military: County employees who leave their positions as a result 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 the state and federal regulations in effect at the time of their release from active duty.

Any Hansford 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.

22.

LEAVE WITHOUT
PAY FOR
PERSONAL REASONS

22. LEAVE WITHOUT PAY FOR PERSONAL REASONS

1. Maximum: Each supervisor shall have the authority to grant an employee up to ~~sixty~~ (30) days leave without pay for personal reasons, provided that no problems will be created by leaving the employee's job unfilled for the period of the requested leave.

Upon the recommendation of the supervisor and the department head, the Commissioners' Court may grant an employee personal leave without pay for a period of up to ninety (90) days, provided the employee's position may be left unfilled for the period requested without creating undue hardship on the department.

2. Benefits during personal leave: An employee on personal leave without pay shall not accrue vacation or sick leave during the period of personal leave.

An employee on personal leave without pay may continue medical and life insurance coverage on him/herself and, if applicable, coverage on eligible dependents by paying the premiums for such coverage on or before the due date set by Hansford County.

3. Use of paid leave: Unless special exception is granted by the Commissioner's Court, leave without pay for personal reasons shall only be granted after all available vacation leave is used.

23.

**GROUP MEDICAL
AND LIFE
INSURANCE**

23. GROUP MEDICAL AND LIFE INSURANCE

1. Eligibility: All regular full-time employees of Hansford County shall be eligible for coverage under the group medical and life insurance program provided by Hansford County. Hansford County will pay the premiums for such group policies.

2. Dependent coverage: An employee eligible for coverage under the group hospitalization and medical insurance program of the county may include eligible family members under the coverage by paying a portion of the premium cost.

A portion of premiums for family members covered under this plan shall be deducted from the employee's paycheck.

Employees may inquire in the treasurer's or auditor's office as to current costs for enrolling family members in the county's hospitalization and medical insurance plan.

3. Benefits: The benefits for this program shall be in accordance with the provisions of the master contract.

A copy of the master shall be kept in the court administrator's office and may be reviewed by employees during normal working hours.

A covered employee and covered dependents, under certain circumstances, may elect at their sole expense to continue benefits for up to 18 months. Information on the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) is available in the court administrator's office.

24. RETIREMENT BENEFITS

24. RETIREMENT BENEFITS

1. Hansford County shall participate in the retirement and the pre-retirement death benefit program of the Texas County and District Retirement System.
2. Details of eligibility for and benefits provided by the program shall be available for review at the Treasurer's office during normal work hours.
3. The employee's share of the retirement contribution shall be deducted from each paycheck.
4. The current deduction for retirement benefits is seven (7%). Check with your Treasurer for the rate the County matches.
5. After an employee has worked for the County for eight (8) years and is vested, the County will pay up to \$500.00 for a gift and party for that employee when he/she retires or leaves County employment.
5. Hansford County currently has an agreement with the Texas County and District Retirement System for eight (8) year vesting and the rule of 75 years.

TCDRS requires at least a full calendar month break in service with no pre-arranged return) Retired employees shall be eligible to apply for open positions with Hansford County as long as the following provisions are met: 1) The retiree has been retired for at least one calendar months, 2) No prior arrangement or agreement was made between Hansford 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 one calendar month. A bona fide separation means there is no prior agreement or understanding between Hansford 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 work in a different department or a 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 of their monthly retirement payments. Abusing the retirement provisions in such a manner would violate a qualification requirement for retirement plans under Section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, potentially resulting in significant tax consequences for the employer, its participating members, and those retired employees.

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 considered to be a new member for the purposes of beneficiary determination and benefit selections.

25.

**SUPPLEMENTAL
INSURANCE**

25. SUPPLEMENTAL INSURANCE

1. Hansford County employees are eligible to participate in supplemental insurance programs. The supplemental insurance programs must be approved by the Hansford County Commissioners' Court.
2. Details of the programs currently approved by the Hansford County Commissioners' Court are available in the office of the court administrator.

All supplemental insurance coverage premiums are the responsibility of the employee. Information regarding these supplemental insurances may be obtained from the Court administrator's office during open enrollment. Supplemental insurance is the responsibility of the employee.

26.

SOCIAL

SECURITY

AND

MEDICARE

26. SOCIAL SECURITY / MEDICARE

1. All Hansford County employees shall participate in the federal Social Security/Medicare program, which provides certain retirement and disability income benefits.
2. Deductions shall be made from each employee's paycheck in accordance with the requirements of the Social Security/Medicare program.
3. Hansford County shall pay an amount equal to the employee's Social Security/Medicare deduction to each employee's Social Security account in accordance with the regulations of the program.
4. The current Social Security tax rate is 6.2% for employers and employees. For Medicare, the rate is 1.45% each for employers and employees.

27.

**WORKERS
COMPENSATION**

27. WORKERS' COMPENSATION

1. Applicability: All employees of Hansford County shall be covered by the workers' compensation program while on duty for the county.

2. Benefits: Under the workers' compensation program, an employee who suffers a job related injury or job related illness shall be eligible to have all eligible medical expenses paid for such injury or illness and, if unable to work for more than seven (7) calendar days, an employee may be eligible to receive workers' compensation indemnity benefits which begin on the eighth day of disability.

3. Responsibility for reporting: Because failure to report job related injuries or illnesses in a timely manner may affect an employee's eligibility to receive workers' compensation benefits or may delay benefit payments, an employee who suffers an on-the-job injury or job-related illness shall notify his/her supervisor within 72 hours of the injury or onset of the illness and will fill out the appropriate reporting forms.

4. Physician's release: An employee receiving workers' compensation benefits shall be required to provide a release from the attending physician before returning to work.

28.

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE
EDUCATION AND
TREATMENT**

28. SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT AND EDUCATION PURPOSE

The objective of Hansford County is to develop a drug and alcohol-free workplace, which will help ensure a safe and productive workplace, and to provide education and treatment to our employees. To further this objective, the following rules regarding alcohol and illegal drugs in the workplace have been established.

POLICY

1. The county shall implement a comprehensive drug and alcohol abuse education program. As part of that program, information will be provided on the availability of employee assistance program services.
2. Alcoholism and other drug addiction are recognized as diseases responsive to proper treatment, and this will be an option as long as the employee is willing to enroll in a treatment program approved by the County. Failure to enroll or finish said program could result in suspension without pay or termination. All policies stand alone, and the finding that one section is unenforceable does not negate the remainder of the policy or policies.
3. The manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, sale, purchase, or use of a controlled substance or drug paraphernalia on county property is prohibited.
4. Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs on county property or while on duty for the county is prohibited. The unauthorized use or possession of prescription drugs or over-the-counter drugs on county property is prohibited.
5. Employees who violate this policy are subject to appropriate disciplinary action, including termination.
6. The policy applies to all employees of the county, regardless of rank or position, and includes temporary and part-time employees.
7. The only exception to this policy shall be the possession of controlled substances by law enforcement personnel as part of their law enforcement duties.

DEFINITIONS

A. COUNTY PREMISES - All county property, including vehicles, lockers, and parking lots.

B. COUNTY PROPERTY - All county-owned or leased property used by employees , such as vehicles, lockers, desks, closets, etc.

C. CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE - shall include any substance listed in Schedules I-V of Section 202 of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C.S 812). as amended. (A copy of this information is available for review in the Hansford County Sheriff's Department.

D. DRUG - A drug is any chemical substance that produces physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral change in the user.

E. DRUG PARAPHERNALIA - Equipment, a product or material that is used or intended for use in concealing an illegal drug or for use in injecting, ingesting, inhaling, or otherwise introducing into the human body an illegal drug or controlled substance.

F. FITNESS FOR DUTY - To work in a manner suitable for the job. To determine "fitness", a medical evaluation may include drug and/or alcohol testing.

G. ILLEGAL DRUG - An illegal drug is any drug or derivative thereof which the use, possession, sale, transfer, attempted sale or transfer, manufacture or storage of is illegal or regulated under any federal, state, or local law or regulation and any other drug, including (but not limited to a prescription drug, used for any reason other than a legitimate medical reason and inhalants used illegally. Included is marijuana or cannabis in all forms.

H. NEGATIVE TEST RESULTS - "Negative Test" results are results that indicate no alcohol or drugs in the employee's system other than properly used prescription medication.

I. REASONABLE CAUSE/REASONABLE SUSPICION - Supported by evidence strong enough to establish that a policy violation has occurred.

J. TESTING - Is generally defined as a urine, blood, or breath test to determine chemical or drug content. Testing can occur in the following instances:

- (1) Pre-employment process.
- (2) Routine physical examination as required by the county.
- (3) Reasonable cause to suspect use.
- (4) Injury involving employee(s) causing or contributing to the injury.
- (5) On-the-job accident, including, but not limited to any accident involving a motor vehicle.

Testing results will remain confidential except that the results will be made known to the employee's supervisor.

K. UNDER THE INFLUENCE - A state of having a blood alcohol concentration of 0.04 or more, where "alcohol concentration" has the meaning assigned to it in Article 67011-1, Revised statutes; or the state of not having the normal use of mental or physical faculties resulting from the voluntary introduction into the body of an alcoholic beverage, a controlled substance, or a combination of both.

GENERAL POLICY PROVISION

Any of the following actions constitutes a violation of the Policy and may subject an employee to disciplinary action, including immediate termination:

A. Using, selling, purchasing, transferring, possession, manufacturing, or storing an illegal drug or drug paraphernalia, or attempting or assisting another to do so, while in the course of employment or engaged in a county-sponsored activity, on county premises, in county-owned, leased, or rented vehicles, or on business.

B. Working or reporting to work, conducting county business or being on county premises or in a county-owned, leased or rented vehicle while under the influence of an illegal drug, alcohol or in an impaired condition.

C. Switching, adulterating or attempting to tamper with any sample submitted for medical testing, or otherwise interfering or attempting to interfere with the testing process.

PREVENTIVE ACTS

1. Using, selling, purchasing, transferring, possessing, manufacturing, or storing an illegal drug or drug paraphernalia, or attempting or assisting another to do so, while in the course of employment or engaged in a county-sponsored activity, on county premises, in county-owned, leased, or rented vehicles, or on business.
2. Any employee involved in a work-related accident where alcohol or drugs are believed to be a contributing factor will be referred to an employee assistance counselor in addition to any other accident investigation activities.

CORRECTIVE ACT

Although employees will not be subjected to random fitness for duty examinations as a result of the Policy, any employee involved in a work-related accident may be subject to a urine and a breath test.

SEARCHES

This county reserves the right to conduct searches or inspections of an employee's desks and offices located on county property, whether secured, unsecured, or secured by a lock or locking device, based on reasonable suspicion.

Any item found during a search believed to be an illegal drug or drug paraphernalia will be confiscated by the Hansford County Sheriff's Department. The individual from whom the item or substance has been confiscated will be given a written receipt listing the items or substances seized.

In the administration of these search provisions, personal privacy will be considered to the maximum extent practicable.

APPLICANT TESTING

Refusal to give written consent for a drug screening test will disqualify the candidate for employment.

A. OBJECTIVE - To maintain the high professional standards of the county's work force, it is imperative that individuals who use illegal drugs be screened out during the initial employment process before they are placed on the employment rolls of the county. This procedure will have a positive effect by reducing instances of illegal drug use by employees working within the county, and will provide for a safer work environment. For these reasons, drug testing may be required of all applicants.

B. VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS - Every vacancy announcement for positions designated for applicant testing shall state:

"Any applicant tentatively selected for this position may be required to submit to testing to screen for illegal drug use before employment."

In addition, each applicant will be notified that employment in the position will be contingent upon a negative drug test result. Failure of the vacancy announcement to contain this statement notice will not preclude applicant testing if advance written notice is provided to applicants in some other manner.

C. CONSEQUENCES - The County will decline to extend a final offer of employment to any applicant with a verified positive test result, and such applicant will not be considered for employment by the County for a period of one year. The Personnel Officer working on the applicant's file shall be directed to object to the applicant based on failure to pass the physical, a lack of personal characteristics necessary to relate to public employment, or failure to support the goals of the county. The county shall inform such applicant that a confirmed presence of an illegal drug in the applicant's urine precludes the county from hiring the applicant.

EMPLOYEE TESTING

Refusal by an employee to submit to screen testing will be considered cause for discharge.

A. OBJECTIVE - The County's objective to submit to screen testing will be considered a cause for discharge.

B. WHEN:

1. Testing may be required for DOT/CDL Drivers
2. Any employee suspected of having caused or contributed to an on-the-job accident will be tested.
3. Individual testing shall be required when there is reasonable suspicion that drugs or alcohol are affecting job performance and conduct in the workplace.

C. IMMEDIATE FITNESS EXAMINATION - When, as determined by the immediate supervisor and the next higher level of management, reasonable grounds exist to believe that an employee is impaired or an employee's unsatisfactory behavior or job performance reasonably suggest to management that substance abuse may be a contributing factor, the county reserves the right to require an immediate fitness for duty examination such as a medical evaluation, which may include drug and/or alcohol testing. Refusal to participate in such an evaluation shall be considered equivalent to a positive result and shall result in immediate dismissal.

D. CONSEQUENCES:

1. A positive test shall mean either the presence of a drug and/or alcohol. Sample testing procedures shall conform to scientifically accepted analytical methods and procedures and shall include confirmation of any positive test result by gas chromatography, mass spectroscopy, or other reliable analytical methods, before the results of any test may be used as a basis for any action.

- a. When a screen test is positive for the first time, but no evidence of drug or alcohol use on the job exists, the employee will be suspended with pay until all county-required testing and

treatment is completed. The employee will be required to obtain a written evaluation for drug abuse from a recognized professional and/or institution (this will be at the employee's expense). If there is evidence of drug or alcohol use on the job, the employee may be disciplined or discharged and not be eligible for reinstatement.

b. To be reinstated to a job, an employee must have a signed release from a medical doctor stating that he/she are fit for work. The employee must submit to another screen test and have a negative result within six weeks from the date he/she was suspended; otherwise, the employee will be discharged. The County will decide when the test shall be administered. Before the employee returns to work, he/she will be required to sign a reinstatement agreement that states under what conditions the employee will be reinstated and that random drug testing may be conducted for one year.

2. An employee who has been suspended for a positive drug test and allowed to return to work will be discharged for a positive result on any confirmatory drug test.

E. POLICY PARAMETERS:

1. For confidentiality, only county supervisors who have a need to know will be informed of positive results of fitness for duty examinations. Employees' privacy will be protected, and the employer, without exception, will punish any breach of workers' privacy and confidentiality.

2. The county will use only laboratories that are certified under appropriate federal and/or state regulations.

3. Only conclusive results are to be reported to the county. A positive urinalysis test will be confirmed by a second test using gas chromatography or mass spectroscopy, or another reliable analytical method. Both tests must be positive or the results are considered inconclusive, thereby causing a negative presence of substances to be reported to the county.

SUPERVISORY AND EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Supervisors must receive training regarding the Drug and Alcohol Policy and the use of the Employee Assistance Program. All employees will receive copies of the Drug and Alcohol Policy and information about the Employee Assistance Program.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Any employee suspected of violating this Policy may be immediately suspended without pay pending completion of an investigation. During the course of an investigation, the suspected employee shall have the opportunity to provide an explanation. In the event that a determination is made by the county that the employee violated this Policy, the employee shall be terminated. Should the determination be made that no violation occurred, the employee will be reinstated without penalty and will be paid any lost wages.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The county will provide employees and their families with confidential, professional assessment and referral for assistance in resolving or accessing treatment for addiction to, dependency on, or problems with alcohol, drugs, or other personal problems adversely affecting their job performance. Confidential assessment and referral services will be provided without cost to the employee or family member. The cost of treatment, counseling or rehabilitation resulting from EAP referral will be the responsibility of the employee.

When documented job impairment has been observed and identified, a supervisor may recommend participation in the EAP. Any action taken by the supervisor, however, will be based on job performance.

Supervisor referrals to the EAP will include the employee's release of information consent form to be returned to the county supervisor by the EAP. Refusal to participate in, or failure to complete, the EAP-directed program will be documented. Should job performance not improve after a reasonable amount of time, the employee is subject to progressive corrective action up to and including termination of employment.

Self-referral by employees or family members is strongly encouraged. The earlier a problem is addressed, the easier it is to deal with and the higher the success rate. While self-referral in itself does not preclude the county's use of corrective actions, participation in an EAP-directed program may enable the supervisor to allow time for completion of such a program before initiating or determining additional corrective actions.

EAP-related activities, such as referral appointments, will be treated on the same basis as other personal business or health matters with regard to use of sick or compensation leave. Sick leave may be taken as needed, while compensation time must be pre-approved.

COORDINATION WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

The sale, use, purchase, transfer, or possession of an illegal drug or drug paraphernalia is a violation of the law. The county will report information concerning possession, distribution, or use of any illegal drugs to law enforcement officials and will turn over to the custody of law enforcement officials any such substances found during a search of an individual or property. Searches will only be conducted on individuals based on reasonable cause, and only of their vehicles, lockers, desks, and closets when based on reasonable suspicion. The county will cooperate fully in the prosecution and/or conviction of any violation of the law.

RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

The county reserves the right to interpret, change, suspend, cancel, or dispute, with or without notice, all or any part of this policy, or procedures or benefits discussed herein. Employees will be notified before the implementation of any change.

Although adherence to this Policy is considered a condition of continued employment, nothing in this Policy alters an employee's status and shall not constitute nor be deemed a contract or promise of employment. Employees remain free to resign their employment at any time for any or no reason, without notice, and the county retains the right to terminate any employee at any time, for any or no reason, without notice.

OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

The provisions of this policy shall apply in addition to, and shall be subordinated to, any requirements imposed by applicable federal, state, or local laws, regulations, or judicial decisions. Unenforceable provisions of this policy shall be deemed to be deleted.

29.

**MILEAGE AND
TRAVEL EXPENSE
REIMBURSEMENT**

29. MILEAGE AND TRAVEL EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

Reimbursement for travel, meals, and lodging is available for employees conducting business on behalf of Hansford County. Vouchers for reimbursement must be submitted directly to the office of the Hansford County Treasurer by the employee incurring the expense. **THERE WILL BE NO REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSES EXCEPT ON DIRECT SUBMISSION TO THE TREASURER BY THE EMPLOYEE.**

Transportation:

1. Automobile reimbursement is based on the Official State Mileage Guide. The Hansford County Treasurer's Office will compute reimbursement.

If you drive a county-owned vehicle and use a credit card or cash for gas or any other purchase for the vehicle, the **original** receipt **must** be turned in to the Treasurer's office, or the driver will be responsible for the total cost of the charge to the card.

2. Airfare reimbursement is limited to coach airfare. Your airline ticket stub must be attached to your travel voucher. Airfare is for economy class only unless approved by the commissioner court

3. Taxi or shuttle transit receipts (to and from airport and hotel) and airport parking receipts ***** & agendas** must be attached to the travel voucher to receive reimbursement. No tips will be reimbursed.

Lodging and meals

Reimbursement for lodging plus applicable tax is available when the business of the county requires an overnight stay outside the limits of Hansford County. Your hotel bill must accompany your travel voucher. No receipts are required for meals. The county pays ****\$15.00** per meal. In no event will reimbursement for meals exceed ****\$45.00** per day.

*******In order to be reimbursed for meals on trips outside the county that do not require an overnight stay, receipts **are required**. You may be reimbursed for the receipt amount, not to exceed \$15.00.

If an employee of Hansford County lives outside the territorial limits of Hansford County and the employee's workstation is located in Hansford County, there will be no reimbursement for daily meals.

Miscellaneous

Rental car receipts must accompany your travel voucher.

Non-reimbursable expense

Rental cars, taxis or Shuttle Transit fares (without receipts)
Entertainment expenses
Liquor
Tips
Telephone calls
Laundry charges
Charges for miscellaneous hotel services

***Reserve Deputy Reimbursement**

A. Reserve deputies **may** be reimbursed for training that is mandated by TCLEOSE to keep the reserve deputy's license current. This training will be scheduled by the Sheriff or Chief Deputy. This training will be scheduled through PRPC if at all possible, or the next closest entity hosting the training. The reserve deputy may take additional training in specialized fields. This training will be paid for by the reserve deputy and will not be reimbursed unless authorized by the Sheriff **and** approved by the Commissioners Court.

B. Reserve Deputies **may** be reimbursed for meals while actively on duty outside of Hansford County. This will include meal expenses incurred while on training assignment, and prisoner transports outside of Hansford County. The meal reimbursement will be **the amount of the receipt, up to **\$15 per meal.**

30.

CONFERENCES

AND

SEMINARS

30. CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

A. While Commissioner's Court approval is not required before an elected official or department head attends or allows a county employee under his supervision to attend a conference or seminar in connection with the department's official duties, care must be exercised in the expenditure of funds budgeted for such purposes. The elected official or department head must ensure that the line item for such expenditures is used in travel to conferences and seminars that first satisfy continuing education requirements for the office holder or employee and, second, furthers the legitimate county employment interests of the office holder or employee. Should the office holder or department head fail to properly manage the available conference and seminar funds and thereby fail to first satisfy the continuing education requirements for the office holder or employees, the elected official or department head jeopardizes future budget approval of this line item. If the elected official or department head fails to ensure that expenditures from this fund are used to further the legitimate county employment interest of the office holder or employee, the elected official or department head may be personally liable for the payment of such expenses.

B. Policies concerning National Conventions for Employees and Elected Officials:

1. Hansford County does not pay **ANY** elected official or employees' expenses concerning national conventions unless approved by the Commissioner's court.

31.

**EMPLOYEE
COMPLAINTS**

31. EMPLOYEE COMPLAINTS

In an effort to enhance the function of evaluating, investigating and resolving problems which may arise, any employee complaints concerning policies, practices, working conditions, personnel or personnel problems, including but not limited to, complaints of "sexual harassment", shall be directed to the employee's immediate supervisor. If, however, circumstances make such communication inappropriate, the complaint shall be directed to the County Judge.

Sexual Harassment is a form of gender-based discrimination prohibited by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It is defined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as:

"Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to the conduct enters into employment decisions and/or the conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment."

Upon receiving a complaint, the County Judge shall:

1. Reduce, or cause the employee to reduce the complaint to writing and file the complaint in the complaining employees' personnel file;
2. Attempt to resolve the complaint of policy, practice, condition or problem; and
3. Document the action taken by placing a written memorandum thereof in the complaining employee's personnel file. If appropriate, the complaint and memorandum of action taken may be sealed before inclusion in the employee's personnel file.

Complaints should not be addressed to individual members of the Commissioners' Court unless absolutely required within the context of official tasks. Any communication with an individual member of the Commissioners' Court concerning critical policies, practices, working conditions, personnel or personnel problems shall be reported as soon as reasonable possible to the employees immediate supervisor, unless inappropriate under the circumstances, and in that event, the complaint shall be reported to the County Judge and thereafter handled as if the complaint was made directly to the County Judge.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Hansford County is committed to providing a workplace free of violence. Hansford 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 Hansford 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-6 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 Myspace.

Hansford 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 Hansford County among the community at large. Hansford 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 Hansford County make clear that you are an employee of Hansford County and that the views posted are yours alone and do not represent the views of Hansford County.
- Do not mention Hansford County supervisors, employees, customers, or vendors without their express consent.
- Do not pick fights. If you see a misrepresentation about Hansford 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 Hansford County computer equipment for non-work-related activities without written permission. Social media activities should not interfere with your duties at work. Hansford County monitors its computers to ensure compliance with this restriction.
- You must comply with copyright laws, and cite or reference sources accurately.
- Do not link to Hansford County's website or post Hansford County material on a social media site without written permission from your supervisor.
- All Hansford 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 Hansford 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 Hansford County that supervisors do not engage in social media activities with their employees.

32.

SEPARATION

FROM

EMPLOYMENT

32. SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT

Types: All separations from employment with Hansford County shall be designated as one of the following: **Resignation, Retirement, Dismissal, Disability, Reduction in Force (Lay-off), and Discharge without fault, or Death.**

1. A Resignation shall be classified as any situation in which an employee voluntarily leaves his/her employment with Hansford County, and the separation does not fall into one of the other categories.

To resign in good standing, the employee shall be required to notify his/her supervisor in writing of the intent to resign at least ten (10) working days prior to the last day of work. Failure to resign in good standing may result in an employee losing part or all of accrued benefits.

A supervisor shall be responsible for notifying the treasurer as soon as an employee announces his/her intent to resign.

Health insurance and all benefits are terminated immediately when an employee resigns or is terminated. All vacation and compensatory time is to be paid by the County from this date.

The treasurer is responsible for contacting the person in charge of handling the county's insurance. If that person is unavailable, the treasurer is responsible for contacting our insurance carrier.

2. The same requirements for resignation apply to **Retirement**, except that the employee should notify his/her supervisor at least forty-five (45) days prior to the last day of work so that any retirement benefits due may be started promptly.

3. A **Dismissal** shall be any involuntary separation from employment which does not fall into one of the other categories.

4. A Separation for Disability shall be any situation in which the employee is unable to perform the duties of his/her job for physical or mental reasons.

5. An employee shall be separated because of **Reduction in Force (Lay-off)** when his/her position is abolished or when there is a lack of funds or work.

While such action is avoided whenever possible, employees of Hansford 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 that are beyond the control of the employee or employer.

A Lay-off shall not reflect discredit on 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 may be integrated into other departments by transfer.

If Layoffs are required, they shall be based on the continuing need for a particular function.

6. All employees of Hansford County are, because of the political nature of county government, "Employees At Will". Because of this "Employment At Will" policy, all employees are subject to **"Discharge without fault"** from the staff of an elected official.

A "Discharge without fault" shall not reflect discredit on the employee or on the employee's ability to do the job for which they were employed, and the employee, upon "Discharge without fault", is entitled to unemployment compensation benefits as provided by law.

7. Upon the **Death** of an employee while in the service of Hansford County, his/her designated beneficiary or estate shall receive all earned pay and payable benefits.

33.

ADVERSE

PERSONNEL

ACTIONS AND

DISMISSAL

33. ADVERSE PERSONNEL ACTIONS AND DISMISSAL

Involuntary termination from employment (Dismissal) is but one of several adverse personnel actions that may be taken against an employee. Available sanctions include, but are not limited to, verbal reprimands, written reprimands which become a permanent part of the employee's personnel file, temporary suspension from duty without pay, demotion, demotion with reduction in pay, and involuntary termination (Dismissal).

Adverse personnel actions may be taken against employees for any of the following reasons:

1. Violation of the **CODE OF ETHICS**;
2. Violation of any policy contained in this handbook.
3. Violation of any departmental rule of which the employee has notice;
4. Violation of any penal law of the grade of felony.
5. Violation of any misdemeanor penal law involving moral turpitude.
6. Public intoxication.
7. Consumption or possession of alcohol while on duty.
8. Consumption or possession of any controlled substance listed in the Texas Controlled Substances Act, (V.A.C.S. 4476-15, as amended), copies of which are maintained for employee review by the Hansford County Sheriff's Department, or possession of paraphernalia identified as equipment, a produce or material that is used or intended for use in concealing an illegal drug or for injecting, ingesting, inhaling or otherwise introducing into the human body an illegal drug or controlled substance;
9. Failure to carry out the lawful directives of the employee's supervisor;
10. Absence from the employee's duty station without leave from the supervisor;
11. Deliberate disrespect for our personal denigration of fellow employees, supervisors, or members of the public.
12. Misuse, misapplication, or misappropriation of county property.
13. Engaging in personal pursuits during duty hours that interfere with the employee's job responsibility.
14. Failure to perform assigned job tasks.
15. Misrepresentation of the employee's rights, duties, authority, or responsibility.

16. Encouraging, aiding, or assisting any employee in violation of any of the above.

17. Failure to report a violation of any of the above.

Should it become necessary to involuntarily terminate an employee, the employee shall receive his or her final pay.

HANSFORD COUNTY PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE POLICY

Purpose: To provide a formal system of communication between the Elected Official or Department Head and his/her employee concerning less than satisfactory job performance and/or job-related behavior.

Objectives:

1. To provide elected officials and department heads with a system for dealing with employee discipline problems by establishing suggested policies and procedures.
2. To assure that employees are not subjected to disciplinary actions because of their race, color, creed, religion, sex, age, national origin, or disability.

Progression:

1. Written Warning: is routinely given for continuous minor violations or for a more serious violation of a work rule or procedure. The supervisor should state in the written warning what the specific problem is, the time allowed to correct the problem, suggestions on how to improve, and the consequences for not correcting the problem. The employee is given the opportunity to review the warning notice, which he/she is requested to sign. The employee's signature verifies the fact that he/she has seen the notice, not that the employee necessarily agrees with the action.

2. Second Written Warning: given for continuous violation(s). The employee should be informed that termination may be the next step. The employee is given the opportunity to review the warning notice which he/she is requested to sign. The employee's signature verifies the fact that he/she has seen the notice, not that the employee necessarily agrees with the action.

3. Termination: Employees who fail to correct or improve unsatisfactory job-related behavior and/or work performance after the supervisor has given them a reasonable opportunity to do so are terminated from employment. Additionally, employees may be terminated for no cause, as is outlined in the Hansford County policy on employment at will.

4. Some infractions may be so bad as to warrant immediate termination. These infractions will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

34.

TERMINATION

PAY

34. TERMINATION PAY

If an employee leaves the service of Hansford County, his/her final paycheck shall include:

1. Pay for all hours worked for which payment has not been received.
2. Where applicable, pay for compensatory time which has been earned but not yet used.
3. Pay for any leave time for which payment is due under the provisions of the County's personnel policies.
4. Deductions for any indebtedness to Hansford County which the employee may have incurred but which has not been paid.

35. SAFETY

HANSFORD COUNTY POLICY ON SAFETY

SAFETY STANDARDS 1. Each County employee shall be required to adhere to the general safety standards established for all employees and to all additional safety standards for their job or the department in which he/she-work.

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

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

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

36.

**APPROVAL OF
SPENDING BY
CERTAIN COUNTY AND
PRECINCT OFFICERS**

36. APPROVAL OF SPENDING BY CERTAIN COUNTY AND PRECINCT OFFICERS.

If an incumbent county or precinct officer is not re-appointed or re-elected to the county or precinct office of the county, during the time following the date the results of the official canvass of the primary or election returns are announced, the Commissioners Court must approve any expenditure by the incumbent county or precinct officer who was not re-appointed or re-elected that is over the amount of \$500, set by the Commissioners Court.

37.

**CELL PHONES
REIMBURSEMENTS**

37. CELL PHONES REIMBURSEMENTS

1. Cell Phones may be reimbursed up to \$30 per month.
 - a. Receipts may be randomly requested to verify availability for County calls.

38.

UNIFORMS

38. Uniforms

- 1.** Sheriff's Office – Uniforms are the property of the county. All uniforms are to be returned before the final paycheck is issued.

39. COVID POLICY

39. HANSFORD COUNTY COVID POLICY

Employees are required to notify their department head if they are showing symptoms of COVID-19 or any of its variants. Symptoms that appear after exposure include but are not limited to the following:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

For recordkeeping purposes, if an employee is off work due to COVID, the employee must get a COVID test and submit the results to the Treasurer or have the results sent from the clinic/testing facility. If the test is positive and the employee is symptomatic, they will be required to isolate for 5 days before returning to work. If the employee is not showing symptoms and has a positive COVID test, they will be required to isolate for 5 days before returning to work in accordance with the CDC guidelines.

If someone in the employee's household tests positive for COVID, the employee will be able to work as long as they have no symptoms. If symptoms appear, and if test results are positive, isolate for ~~at~~ 5 days.

Employees will use their accrued sick leave to receive full pay for being absent either in quarantine or isolation. If an employee does not have enough accrued sick leave to cover the absent period, pay will be at the discretion of the Hansford County Commissioners Court.

40. JURY POLICY

40. HANSFORD COUNTY JURY POLICY

Payment Procedures

Prospective jurors shall be paid \$20.00 from the "Cash Jury Fund" on the day they appear for jury duty and are NOT selected.

Jurors and alternates selected and present on a jury will receive \$20.00 on the day seated, and \$60.00 per day after the first day.

Prospective jurors and those seated/alternates are not provided meals or money for lunch on the first day of jury selection. Jurors and alternates present are to be paid \$15.00 cash each day for lunch after selection day when meals are not provided.

41.

CREDIT CARD

POLICY

Hansford County
CREDIT CARD POLICY

The county credit card is issued to appropriate employees for the purchase of items that cannot be otherwise obtained with a purchase order. All employees who are issued a card are required to read and abide by this policy and sign the Employee Acknowledgement section on the request form.

Please note:

- If possible, an invoice must be produced for payment instead of using the credit card. Talk to the vendor about this option.
- All travel expenses are covered by the County's Mileage and Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy listed in the County Employee Handbook.
- It is the responsibility of the **credit card user** to ensure the County is not charged sales taxes. The **credit card user** will be responsible for reimbursing the County for sales tax. If a vendor requests a Texas Sales and Use Tax Exemption Certificate, contact the Treasurer or Auditor's office for the form and include the vendors name and address. The Treasurer or Auditor's office will complete the form and send it back to the credit card holder.
- All purchases are covered by the County's Purchasing Practices Policy listed in the County Employee Handbook.
- Documentation for all credit card purchases is to be turned into the Treasurer's office as soon as possible after the charge. (see "Payment Process")
- It is the card holder's responsibility to know their credit limit and to not exceed it. Contact the Auditor's office if you need to check your limit.
- Credit cards are requested through the Auditor's office and receipts/payments are handled through the Treasurer's office.
- Issuance of a county credit card is a privilege to the employee. The card will be revoked if the credit card policy is not followed.
- It is the employee's responsibility to take a back-up form of payment in case of issues with the credit card.

County credit cards can be used for the purchase of:

- travel, fuel, air transportation, rental car, and lodging while out of town;
 - for the Sherriff's office, this would include transporting prisoners/mental commitments, and meals.
- memberships, conferences, seminars, and continuing education.
- books and training materials.
- online tools and office supplies if not available from local vendors.
- online computer program subscriptions.

CREDIT CARD USE AGREEMENT

I agree to abide by the following Hansford County Credit Card procedures and understand that if I do not follow procedures my credit card will be canceled immediately, and I will not be issued another card throughout the duration of my employment. I further understand that if I misuse my credit card or use it for personal benefit, I will be required to pay the entire amount back within one month of the charge, or it will be taken out of my paycheck. I understand if the misuse is egregious enough, I will be subject to prosecution.

- ALL purchases must be tax-exempt (with only exceptions being Microsoft Office, hotels, and meals)
- ALL receipts must be given to the Treasurer within one month of purchase, no exceptions
- Purchases over \$500 must be approved by Commissioners Court prior to purchase (hotels being the only exception)
- Excessive shipping costs (\$20 or more) must be approved in writing by department head and submitted to the Treasurer
- It is the cardholder's responsibility to obtain the necessary information such as PIN numbers and credit limits BEFORE leaving on a trip or using the card. (Do not call the Treasurer, call the company)
- Employee will be held responsible for any purchase made using their card and missing a receipt; employee will pay the county back for the purchase
- It is a privilege to be able to use a county credit card, not a right—credit cards may be revoked at any time
- Employees must return credit card to the Treasurer upon separation of employment

Signature

Date

County credit cards cannot be used for:

- payment of meals, tips, or donations
- a single item that costs more than \$500.00
- alcohol
- tobacco products
- personal purchases (including spousal travel)
- fuel purchases if an employee's personal vehicle is being used; mileage reimbursement must be used instead
- cash advances
- taxes on goods or services

Procedure for obtaining a county credit card:

1. Copies of the Credit Card Policy and Credit Card Request Form are available in the Auditor's office.
2. Employee is provided with a copy of the Credit Card Policy to read and retain for their records.
3. Employee completes the Employee Information and Acknowledgement section of the Credit Card Request Form.
4. Authorized Approver completes the Authorized Approver section and returns the form to the Auditor's office.

Payment Process:

- Business card statements run from the 9th of the month to the 8th of the following month. Receipts and supporting documentation for all purchases during that time are due to the Treasurer's office by the 10th. (i.e. for purchases made between March 9 – April 8, receipts are due no later than April 10.) No exceptions.
- Original receipts are required, but in extenuating circumstances, if a receipt cannot be provided, the card holder will need to complete and submit a Missing Receipt Affidavit by the 10th. This is not preferred and should be a rare occurrence. If affidavit is abused Auditor may revoke credit card.
- The County will not be responsible for any late charges as a result of an employee's untimely submission of documentation. Any late charges will be paid by the Credit Card Holder, and the credit card may be revoked.

HANSFORD COUNTY FRAUD, WASTE, AND ABUSE POLICY

Overview

Hansford County is committed to safeguarding public assets and preventing fraud, waste, and abuse—all County officials and employees, as public stewards must share in the commitment. County officials and employees, especially supervisors and department heads, must be aware of the circumstances, or "red flags", which may potentially lead to fraud. For the purpose of this administrative procedure, fraud, waste, and abuse are referred to as "fraud".

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to communicate the County's policy regarding the deterrence and investigation of suspected misconduct and dishonesty by County officials, employees and others and to provide specific instructions regarding appropriate action in the event of suspected violations.

Scope

This policy applies to any fraud, or suspected fraud, involving County employees, County officials, consultants, vendors, contractors, and any other parties with a business relationship with Hansford County.

Goal

The intent of this policy is to establish and maintain a fair, ethical, and honest business environment for all County officials, County employees, customers, suppliers, and anyone else with whom the County has a relationship.

Definitions

County Official - County official refers to any individual who holds a position with the County who is:

Elected: Any individual directly chosen by voters to hold a county office, such as a County Judge, Commissioners, Sheriff, Clerk, Treasurer, etc.

Appointed: Any individual selected by a governing body or elected official to serve in a leadership, administrative, or fiduciary capacity such as County Auditor.

County Employee - County employees refer to any individual who is hired or otherwise engaged to perform services for the County in exchange for a salary, wages, or other compensation and whose activities are under the direction and control of a County official. For the purpose of this policy, this term includes:

Department Heads: Individuals assigned formal management and administrative responsibility to an established department under the control of Commissioners' Court.

Supervisors: Any employee, regardless of job title, who has been delegated the authority to direct, coordinate, or oversee the work of one or more subordinates by a County official.

Regular staff: Any full-time, part-time, temporary or seasonal personnel

Contractual or Assigned staff: Any individual performing work for the County under a contract or specific assignment where the County maintains authority over their conduct or performance

Fraud- Fraud encompasses an array of irregularities and illegal acts characterized by internal or external deception. Fraud can be perpetrated for the benefit of, or to the detriment of, the County, and by people outside as well as inside the County. Examples of fraud include, but are not limited to the following:

- Stealing or misappropriation of funds, supplies, etc.
- Forgery or unauthorized alteration of any document
- Intentional misrepresentation by County personnel regarding payroll records or the payroll records of others
- Knowingly making a false entry in or false alteration of a governmental record
- Making, presenting, or using any record, document, or thing with the knowledge that it is false
- Intentional destruction, concealment, removal, or other that otherwise impairs the verity, legibility, or availability of a government record
- Processing, selling, or offering to sell a governmental record or a blank governmental record form with the intent that be used unlawfully, or with the knowledge that it was obtained unlawfully
- Using or claiming to hold an education degree that is fraudulent, fictitious, or has been revoked, with the intent to obtain employment, promotion, or other benefit
- Credit card abuse or fabrication of transaction
- Making a false statement to obtain property, credit, or services
- Fraudulent transfer of a motor vehicle
- Securing execution of a document by deception
- Fraudulent use or possession of identifying information without that person's consent
- Stealing an unsigned check or receiving an unsigned check with the intent to use it or sell it

Waste- Waste is defined as the harmful or destructive use of property under control. Waste may also be referred to as the unnecessary incurring of costs because of inefficient practices, systems, or controls. Examples of waste include, but are not limited to the following:

- Damaging, destroying, or ruining materials or equipment
- Improper maintenance or intentional mistreatment of equipment
- Purchase of unneeded supplies or equipment
- Purchase of goods at inflated prices
- Failure to reuse or recycle major resources or reduce waste generation

Abuse - Abuse refers to violations and circumventions of departmental or county regulations that impair the effective and efficient execution of operations. Some examples of abuse are as follows:

- Using County equipment or supplies to conduct non-County business
- Improper handling or reporting of money or financial transactions
- Profiting by self or others as a result of inside knowledge
- Destruction or intentional disappearance of records, furniture, fixtures or equipment
- Unauthorized use of County resources (computers, software, databases, other information) for non-County purposes
- Abuse of purchase order authority, such as false travel or expense reports
- Accepting or seeking anything of material value from vendors or people providing services or materials to the County
- Use of information gained as a County employee for personal gain, such as an employee using non-confidential taxpayer information to get new customers for his/her outside business

Deterrence

Deterrence consists of those actions taken to discourage the perpetration of fraud and limit the exposures if fraud does occur. County officials and County employees are responsible for the implementation and maintenance of effective internal controls. The County Auditor's office is responsible for assisting in the deterrence of fraud by examining and evaluating the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls.

Fraud occurs for the following reasons:

1. Poor internal controls, especially disregarded for set policies and procedures
2. Management override of internal controls
3. Collusion between employees and/or third parties
4. Poor or non-existing ethical standards
5. Lack of control over staff by their supervisors

"Red Flags"

The most frequently cited "red flags" of fraud are:

1. Changes in an employee's lifestyle, spending habits, or behavior
2. Poorly written or poorly enforced internal controls, procedures, policies, or security
3. Irregular/unexplained variances in financial information
4. Inventory shortages
5. Failure to act on results of internal/external audits or reviews
6. Unusually high expenses or purchases
7. Frequent complaints from customers
8. Missing files

9. Ignored employee comments concerning possible fraud
10. Refusal to leave the custody of records during the day by the employee
11. Working excessive overtime and refusing to take vacation time off

Fraud Prevention

The following internal controls should minimize the risk and help prevent fraud:

1. Detailed written policies and procedures and adherence to all policies and procedures, especially those concerning documentation and authorization of transactions
2. Physical security and controlled access over assets such as locking doors and restricting access to certain areas
3. Proper training of employees
4. Independent review and monitoring of tasks by the department supervisor, such as approval processing of selected items
5. Separation of duties so that no single employee is responsible for a transaction from start to finish
6. Clear lines of authority
7. Conflict of interest statements which are enforced
8. Rotation of duties in positions more susceptible to fraud
9. Ensuring that employees take regular vacations
10. Regular independent audits of areas susceptible to fraud

Reporting Fraud

If a County official or County employee or members of the community suspects that fraud is being committed within the County, the individual shall report it to any of the following in this order unless conflict exists:

- The immediate supervisor,
- County official or Department Head
- auditor@ochiltree.net 806-659-4105, via e-mail at
auditor@ochiltree.net
17 NW Court Spearman TX 79081
- External Auditor firm Doshier, Piekens & Francis by phone at 806-373-3011, via email at jmerriss@dpfcpa.com; or by mail to P. O. Box 9938, Amarillo, TX 79105
- Contact the Texas State Auditor's Office by phone at 1-800-TX-AUDIT (892-8348), by mail to State Auditor's Office, Attn: SIU, P.O. Box 12067, Austin, TX, 78711-2067, or by submitting to the fraud hotline website at <https://sao.fraud.texas.gov/ReportFraud/>

The Supervisor, County Official, or Department Head should immediately report it to the County Auditor's Office.

At any time, an employee may communicate directly with the County Auditor's Office to report fraud, and the employee will have the option to remain anonymous. Every attempt will be made to protect the identity of the reporting individual. The County Auditor's Office is committed to protecting the employee's identity and confidentiality.

Matters brought to the attention of the County Auditor's Office in which fraud, waste, or abuse of funds may have occurred will be forwarded to the State Auditor's Office as required by the Texas Government Code, Section 321.022.

Retaliation

The Texas Whistleblower Act protects employees who make good faith reports of violations from retaliation. An employee who believes that he or she has experienced retaliation for making a report or assisting in an investigation shall report this as soon as possible to the County Auditor at 806--4015 or by email auditor1@oghi/tree.net

Reporting Unethical Behavior

County officials and County employees are encouraged to seek advice from the County's Personnel Department or County Auditor's office when faced with uncertain ethical decisions. The County Auditor is responsible for the administration, revision, interpretation, and application of this policy. This policy will be reviewed annually and revised as necessary.

Duty to Report

County Officials, County employees, and all others who are subject to this policy have a duty to report violations of this policy and to cooperate in investigations, inquiries, and hearings conducted by the County. However, a person making false reports shall be subject to disciplinary action if he or she reports information that they know to be false or which they disclose with reckless disregard for its truth or falsity.

No Coercion

No County Official or County employee shall directly or indirectly use or threaten to use any official authority or any influence in any manner whatsoever that tends to discourage, restrain, deter, prevent, interfere with, coerce, or discriminate against any person who in good faith reports, discloses, divulges or provides any facts or information relative to an actual or suspected violation of this policy or other state, federal, or local laws.

Consequences

County Department Heads found to have violated this policy will be subject to discipline by Commissioners Court, including a written warning or reprimand, suspension, or termination in accordance with the procedures under which a department head may otherwise be disciplined.

County employees found to have violated this policy will be subject to discipline by their County Official or Department Head regarding violations of this policy, including a written warning or reprimand, suspension, or termination in accordance with the procedures under which the employee may otherwise be disciplined.

Parties doing business with the County, including vendors, consultants, contractors, or their principals and employees, found to have violated this policy will be subject to termination of any business relationship with the County and exclusion from further business opportunities.

with the County. As to any person subject to this policy or otherwise, the County may make a referral of its findings to the appropriate law enforcement authority.

Signed this day 7-13-26

Hansford County Judge Tim Glass T. Glass

County Commissioner, Pct. 1 Brent Reed

County Commissioner, Pct. 2 [Signature]

County Commissioner, Pct. 3 T. Rudy

County Commissioner, Pct. 4 _____

Date of Adoption: 13 day of July 2026

Hansford County Courthouse Cybersecurity Policy and Operating Procedures

1. Document Control and Approval Block

Hansford County Commissioners Court Adoption BE IT RESOLVED, upon recommendation of the County Judge and with the concurrence of the Hansford County Commissioners Court, that the Information Security Policy (Version 2.4) is hereby approved and adopted. This policy specifically supersedes all previous versions and is effective immediately.] Authorization | Name

2. Introduction

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the technical controls, security configurations, and operating procedures required to ensure the integrity, confidentiality, and availability of Hansford County data. It serves as the primary governance document for the protection of County information resources against evolving cyber threats.

2.2 Scope

This policy applies to all employees, elected and appointed officials, contractors, and third parties utilizing Hansford County network infrastructures, databases, hardware, and electronic communication systems. This includes all equipment connected to any County domain or VLAN, whether hardwired or wireless, at on-site courthouse facilities or remote locales.

2.3 Statutory Authority

Hansford County operates under the mandatory cybersecurity requirements established by the Texas Legislature. The following table identifies the primary statutes incorporated into this policy: | Applicable Texas Statute | Purpose / Requirement || ----- | ----- || **Texas Government Code § 2063.103** | Mandatory annual cybersecurity training for all officials and employees with computer access (HB 150). || **Texas Government Code § 2054.603** | SB 271 reporting requirements for security incidents and ransomware to the Texas Cyber Command. || **Texas Business & Commerce Code § 521.053** | Mandatory resident and Attorney General notification following a breach of system security. || **Texas Government Code § 552.139** | Confidentiality exceptions for government information related to computer security and infrastructure. |

2.4 Definitions

- **PII (Personally Identifiable Information):** Any data that could potentially identify a specific individual or distinguish one person from another, including medical condition or health insurance status.
- **Security Incident:** A breach or suspected breach of system security as defined by § 521.053, Business & Commerce Code, and specifically includes the **introduction of ransomware** into a computer, network, or system.

- **TXCC (Texas Cyber Command):** The state authority established under HB 150 responsible for statewide cybersecurity functions, incident reporting, and training certification.
- **VRO (The Virtual Risk Officer):** An Artificial Intelligence platform utilized by the County to evaluate the risk of data breaches and user-driven data risk.
- **Encryption:** The process of transforming information using an algorithm to make it unreadable to anyone other than those who have a specific "need to know."

3. Employee Responsibilities and Acceptable Use

3.1 General Requirements

Every user is the "First Line of Defense" in Hansford County's security posture.

- **Unattended Computers:** Users must lock their workstations when leaving their work area. Systems are configured with an automatic screen lock that activates after fifteen (15) minutes of inactivity. Users are strictly prohibited from overriding this setting.
- **Laptop Security:** Laptops used off-site must be equipped with security mechanisms to prohibit unauthorized use. Users must exercise the utmost care to ensure sensitive personnel or financial data is not compromised while in transit or at remote locations.
- **Software Use:** Only software owned, licensed, and installed by the County is permitted. The use of personal or unauthorized software is prohibited.

3.2 Prohibited Activities

The following actions are strictly prohibited:

- **System Crashing:** Deliberately crashing or attempting to crash an information system.
- **Security Bypassing:** Running password-cracking programs, sniffer programs, or attempting to circumvent file/resource permissions.
- **Malicious Code:** Introducing viruses, Trojan horses, or peer-to-peer (P2P) software.
- **Unauthorized Browsing:** Willful access or inspection of confidential PII or HIPAA-protected data without an approved business "need to know."
- **Commercial/Political Use:** Using County resources for personal/commercial profit or political activities. **Exception:** Authorized information system support personnel, or others specifically authorized by the County Judge, may test the resiliency of a system. Such personnel may test for susceptibility to hardware/software failure, security against hacker attacks, and system infection.

3.3 Electronic Communications

All electronic communication systems and messages generated on or handled by County equipment are the property of Hansford County.

- **Incidental Personal Use:** Permissible only if it consumes "trivial" time and resources, does not interfere with staff productivity, and does not violate harassment or copyright policies.
- **Ownership:** The County reserves the right to monitor all communications (email, internet usage, call lengths) for troubleshooting, resource optimization, and detecting patterns of abuse or illegal activity.

4. Access Control and Password Standards

4.1 User IDs

Every authorized user must have a unique logon ID.

- **Audits:** All logon IDs are audited at least twice yearly to identify and revoke inactive accounts.
- **Separation of Employment:** Human Resources shall notify the IT Director immediately upon the departure of any employee or contractor so that IDs may be revoked.
- **Responsibility:** Users are responsible for all activity performed under their unique credentials.

4.2 Password Complexity and Lockout

Users must maintain unique passwords.

- **Lockout Policy:** Accounts will be locked after five (5) unsuccessful logon attempts.
- **Lockout Duration:** The account will remain locked for five (5) minutes before a password can be re-entered.

4.3 Privileged Access

"Privileged Users" (System Administrators) are restricted to those specifically identified and authorized by the County. Formal access requests must be completed and signed before administrative access is granted.

5. Data Protection and Encryption

5.1 Encryption Standards

Encryption is the mandatory process for making sensitive information unreadable to unauthorized parties. All sensitive data must be encrypted during transfer and while stored on transportable media.

5.2 Data Transfer

County proprietary data (including patient info, financial records, and HR data) shall not be placed on non-County equipment without:

1. Written consent from the respective Department Head.
2. Notification and approval from the IT Director.

5.3 Transportable Media

The use of transportable media (CD-ROMs, flash drives, USB keys) must be strictly controlled. Document integrity must be maintained through the use of certified electronic signatures for all official digital filings.

6. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Governance

6.1 AI System Usage

The County utilizes the **Virtual Risk Officer (VRO)** AI platform to evaluate data breach risks and identify user behaviors that may jeopardize the security of the data environment.

6.2 Governance

All AI systems or software integrations must be approved by the IT Department. This ensures that AI tools do not introduce malicious code or compromise the confidentiality of County data.

7. Physical Courthouse Security

Hansford County maintains courthouse security through a tiered hierarchy of physical protections:

- **Level 1 (Basic Security):**
 - Cylinder locks or deadbolts on all perimeter doors and windows.
 - External lighting for all doors, windows, and sidewalks.
 - Light switches restricted to staff-only access.
 - **Roof-top and crawl space accesses must remain secured at all times.**
 - **Trash receptacles must be positioned away from the building perimeter to mitigate fire and explosive risks.**
- **Level 2 (Enhanced Security):**
 - CCTV monitoring for parking and screening areas.
 - Auxiliary power backups or emergency generators.
 - Duress alarms installed in screening areas and on the judge's bench.
- **Level 3 (High Security):**
 - Ballistic armor panels lining the judge's bench.
 - Glass break detectors on ground-floor windows.
 - Active monitoring of CCTV feeds by law enforcement or security personnel.

8. Security Awareness and Training

8.1 Mandatory Annual Training

Per **Texas Government Code § 2063.103** (as updated by the 89th Legislature), **ALL** elected officials, appointed officials, and employees with access to County information resources must complete a TXCC-certified cybersecurity training program annually. **Note:** The previous "25% of duties" exception has been repealed. Training is now mandatory for every individual with computer or database access, regardless of the percentage of time spent on those resources.

8.2 Compliance Reporting

The County shall verify and report training completion via the state portal (<https://bit.ly/AI-certify>) by **August 31st** each year. Periodic audits will be conducted by the ISO to ensure 100% compliance.

9. Audit Controls and Confidentiality

9.1 System Monitoring

The County reserves the right to monitor all electronic communications. This is conducted to protect the County's equipment, data, and resource availability.

9.2 Confidentiality of Security Information

Under **Texas Government Code § 552.139**, the following information is confidential and excepted from public disclosure:

- Computer network vulnerability reports and security assessments.
- **Information relating to the design, operation, or defense of the County computer network.**
- Photocopies of employee identification badges.
- Information security logs and data arising from efforts to prevent, detect, or investigate a security incident.

10. Incident Response and Breach Notification Procedures

10.1 Immediate Internal Reporting

If a user suspects a virus or security breach:

1. **Stop use** of the computer immediately.
2. **Do not power off** the computer or close any windows.
3. **Disconnect** the computer from the network (physically unplug the network cable).
4. **Notify** the IT Director or supervisor immediately.

10.2 SB 271 Reporting (48-Hour Rule)

The IT Director or ISO must notify the **Texas Cyber Command (TXCC)** within **48 hours** of discovering a "Security Incident," including suspected breaches or the introduction of ransomware.

10.3 Post-Incident Detail

A detailed analysis, including the cause of the incident, must be submitted to the TXCC and the Texas Chief Information Security Officer within **10 business days** of the eradication, closure, and recovery from the incident.

10.4 Resident and Attorney General Notification

- **Resident Notification:** Affected Texas residents must be notified within **60 days** of breach discovery (§ 521.053).
- **Attorney General Notification:** If a breach affects **250 or more** Texas residents, the Texas Attorney General must be notified via the OAG portal within **30 days** of the determination that a breach occurred.

11. Appendices

Appendix A: Incident Reporting Protocol

Standardized procedures and internal forms for documenting the date, time, symptoms, and initial actions taken during a suspected security incident.

Appendix B: System Access Request Protocol

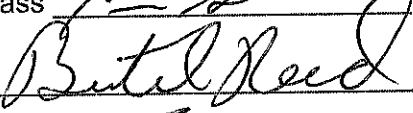
The formal request process for new users and privileged users to obtain access to specific County databases, systems, or network segments.

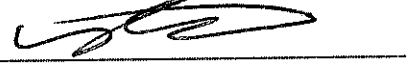
Appendix C: Request for Email Content Search Form

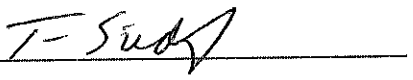
The mandatory formal request process through the County Attorney is required before any search of electronic communication content is performed for audit or investigation purposes.

Signed this day 7-13-26

Hansford County Judge Tim Glass 

County Commissioner, Pct. 1 

County Commissioner, Pct. 2 

County Commissioner, Pct. 3 

County Commissioner, Pct. 4 _____

Date of Adoption: 13 day of July 2026