



LAMB COUNTY EMPLOYEE POLICY HANDBOOK

Adopted by Lamb County Commissioners Court
Effective January 1, 2022



LAMB COUNTY
ORDER OF THE COMMISSIONERS COURT

WHEREAS, the Lamb County Commissioners Court desires to provide the employees of Lamb County with a uniform format for educating themselves regarding various employment-related issues; and

WHEREAS, the Lamb County Commissioners Court wishes to adequately and clearly communicate to employees the policies and procedures of the County:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Lamb County Commissioners Court does hereby approve and adopt the LAMB COUNTY EMPLOYEE POLICY HANDBOOK, as modified and approved by the Court on this day, to go into effect on January 1, 2022.

ADOPTED THIS, the 28th day of December, 2021.

Sincerely,

James M. DeLoach
County Judge

Cory DeBerry
Commissioner, Pct. 1
Kent Lewis
Commissioner, Pct. 2
Danny Short
Commissioner, Pct. 3
Lee Logan
Commissioner, Pct.

Witnessed and Attested by:

Tonya Ritchie
Lamb County Clerk and Ex-Oficio Clerk of the
Lamb County Commissioners Court

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GENERAL AUTHORITY & RESPONSIBILITY

1.01 AUTHORITY

- A. These policies are established by the Commissioners Court, the governing body of Lamb County. Any deletions, amendments, revisions, or additions to the policies must be approved by that body.
- B. These policies replace and supersede all Lamb County general personnel policies previously adopted, individually or as a set of policies, by the Commissioners Court.
- C. Independently Elected or Appointed Officials may issue additional Departmental policies consistent with the policies in this Handbook.
- D. The County Treasurer is the designated Human Resources Director.

1.02 SEVERABILITY

The provisions of these personnel policies are severable, and if any provision or part of the provision is held invalid, illegal, or unenforceable, the validity of the remaining provisions or parts of provisions, will remain in full force and effect.

1.03 IMPLEMENTATION AND RESPONSIBILITY OF POLICIES

- A. The Commissioners Court of Lamb County, in coordination with Lamb County Officials, is responsible for the formulation and administration of general personnel policies and procedures.
- B. County Departments may adopt, and issue to their employees, specific Departmental operations manuals. Departmental manuals shall be consistent with County policy and understanding and acceptance of each applicable Departmental policy will be acknowledged in writing by the employee.
- C. If an employee discovers an apparent inconsistency or unclear language in these policies, the employee is to immediately bring this to the attention of their Elected Official or Supervisor in writing.

1.04 SCOPE

- A. These personnel policies apply equally to all employees of the County. Elected and Appointed Officials are not considered employees of the County, except for administrative functions, such as payroll and benefits. Elected and Appointed Officials are encouraged to follow the general policies of the County.
- B. In cases where federal or state laws or regulations supersede local policy for specific groups of employees, such laws or regulations will substitute for these personnel policies only in so far as necessary for compliance.

1.05 POLICY DISSEMINATION

- A. The Commissioners Court maintains the official set of personnel policies with all revisions for reference for employees. Each employee will be given a copy of the most current Handbook on their first day of employment. Copies of amendments, revisions, or newly-issued policies will be provided to employees by the County Treasurer. In addition, each Department will maintain a current Handbook in its office. Notwithstanding any policy to the contrary, if a question arises about a particular policy, the official set of policies maintained by the Commissioners Court will control.
- B. Every employee is required to sign an Acknowledgment of Receipt of the Employee Handbook. Employees are responsible for reading and complying with all County and Departmental policies.
- C. Every employee is required to sign an Acknowledgment of Privacy and Confidentiality Policies. Employees are responsible for reading, educating themselves, and complying with applicable privacy/confidentiality rules, laws, guidelines, regulations, and policies of the Department for which the employee works.

1.06 POLICY REVISION

The Policy Handbook will be revised as needed. Revisions will be distributed through payroll inserts. The most current version of the Employee Handbook is available in the County Treasurer's Office and on the County website.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

2.01 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

- A. All employment with Lamb County shall be considered “at will” employment. No contract of employment shall exist between any individual and Lamb County for any duration, either specified or unspecified. No provision of this Employee Handbook shall be construed as modifying employment at will status for any employee.
1. Lamb County shall maintain the right to terminate any employee’s employment for any legal reason, or for no reason, at any time, with or without notice.
 2. Lamb County shall maintain the right to change any condition, benefit, policy, or privilege of employment at any time, with or without notice. Employees of Lamb County shall have the right to leave their employment with the County at any time, with or without notice.
- B. Lamb County is an equal opportunity employer. The County will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation (including lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, or transgender status), age, genetic information, pregnancy, veteran status, disability, or any other condition or status protected by the 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, the employee is to advise their Supervisor, Elected Official, Appointed Official, Department Head, or the County Attorney in writing.

2.02 WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

- A. Lamb County is committed to providing and facilitating a workplace free of harassment. Harassment includes unlawful or unwelcome words, acts, or displays based on sex, sexual orientation (including lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, or transgender status), race, color, religion, national origin, age, genetic information, pregnancy, disability, family or military leave status, or veteran status. Such conduct becomes harassment when:
1. The submission to the conduct is made a condition of employment;
 2. The submission to, or rejection of, the conduct is used as the basis for an employment decision; or
 3. The conduct creates an offensive, intimidating, or hostile working environment, or interferes with work performance.
- B. Harassment is strictly prohibited by Lamb County, whether committed by an Elected Official, Supervisor, co-worker, or non-employee with whom the County does business.

- C. Employees who feel they have been harassed should immediately report the incident to the Elected Official responsible for the Department in which the employee works. If, for any reason, the employee feels it would not be the best course of action to report harassment to their Elected Official, the report should be made to the County Judge, County Attorney, or County Treasurer.
- D. Every reported complaint will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. The Elected Official or Supervisor to which a claim has been reported shall be responsible for seeing that prompt action is taken to investigate each claim.
- E. Once the investigation is complete, the employee making the claim shall be notified of the result of the investigation and any action(s) to be taken.
- F. Retaliation against an employee who reports harassment or who cooperates in an investigation of the same is prohibited by law as well as this policy. Employees who feel they have been subjected to retaliation should immediately report the situation to their Elected Official or Supervisor. If, for any reason, the employee feels it would not be the best course of action to report the retaliation to their Elected Official or Supervisor, the report should be made to the County Judge, County Attorney, or County Treasurer.
- G. When the County determines unlawful harassment or retaliation has occurred, disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the circumstances of the incident, up to and including termination.

2.03 PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- A. It is the policy of Lamb County to prohibit any harassment or discriminatory treatment of employees on the basis of a disability, or because an employee has requested a reasonable accommodation for their disability. If an employee feels they have been subjected to such treatment, or has witnessed such treatment, the situation should be reported to the employee's Elected Official or Supervisor, or to the County Attorney. All Elected Officials, Supervisors, and employees with responsibilities requiring knowledge of another employee's disability are instructed to treat it with absolute confidentiality.
- B. Lamb County's policy, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), is to reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with disabilities unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the County. Reasonable accommodations may be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities when such accommodations are necessary to enable the employee to perform the essential functions of their job, or to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment. This policy applies to all applicants for employment, and all employees. If an employee requires an accommodation, the employee must make the request for the same to their Elected Official or Supervisor in writing. Reasonable accommodation shall be determined through an interactive process of consultation.

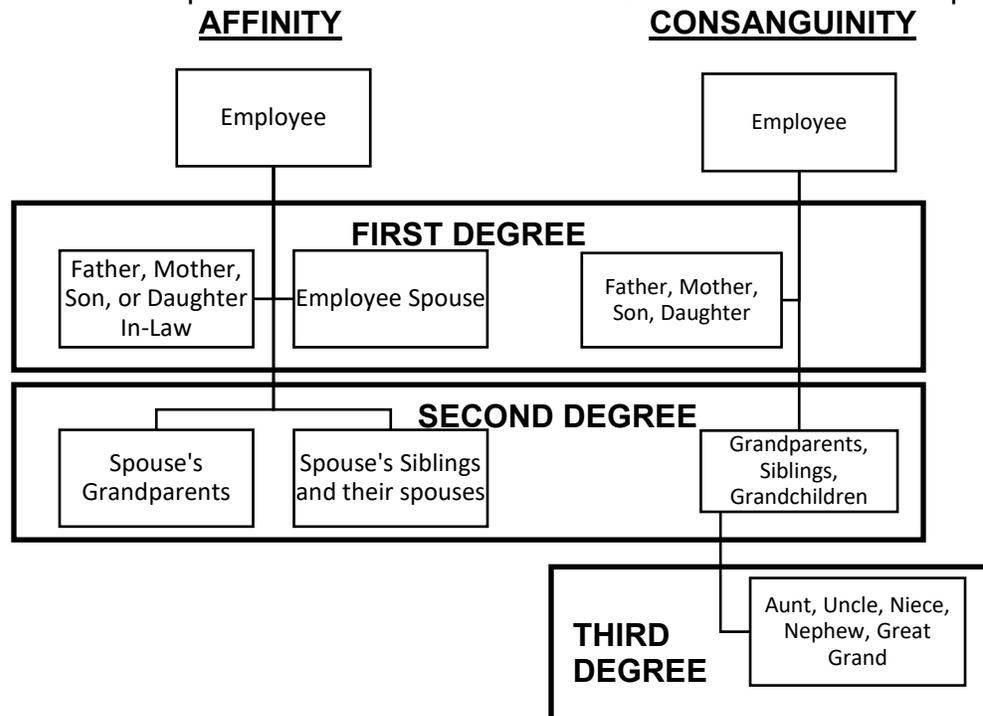
2.04 POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS

No political, fraternal, or religious connections or affiliations shall be considered a condition of or requirement for employment for Lamb County.

2.05 NEPOTISM (Employment of Relatives)

A. Pursuant to Texas Government Code Chapter 573, all Lamb County public officials are prohibited from hiring a relative related within the third degree of consanguinity (blood) or within the second degree of affinity (marriage) to work in a department he/she supervises or exercises control over.

B. A degree of relationship is determined under Texas Government Code Chapter 573:



2.06 AGE REQUIREMENTS

A. Age limits may be prescribed by law for employment in certain positions. Lamb County will comply with state laws and federally imposed age requirements.

B. Within statutory limits and restrictions, individuals aged sixteen (16) to eighteen (18) may be considered for employment in non-hazardous positions.

2.07 RECRUITMENT

A. Each Elected Official determines the method to be used in filling any vacant employment positions; this may include but is not limited to:

1. Promotion from within,
2. County-only announcement, or
3. Public announcement for competitive consideration of external and internal applicants for employment.

- B. The County Treasurer will maintain an application file, contact possible sources of applicants, communicate with appropriate agencies, and advertise as necessary to recruit prospective applicants.
- C. All position postings shall allow for a reasonable period of time after posting to receive applications. Closing dates for posted positions will be strictly observed.
- D. Lamb County may rehire Lamb County retirees after a bona fide separation of employment without suspension of the retiree's monthly Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS) annuity.
 - 1. "Bona fide" separation means no prior agreement or understanding exists between any party on behalf of Lamb County and the retiring employee that the employee would be rehired after retirement.
 - 2. A Lamb County retiree is ineligible for rehire until at least two months have passed since their retirement date.
 - 3. Elected Officials considering rehire of a Lamb County retiree must first meet with the County Treasurer; each case will be reviewed to determine reemployment status.
 - 4. Lamb County retirees who are reemployed in accordance with this policy must establish a new membership with TCDCRS.
 - 5. Violations of this policy and the Internal Revenue Service regulations governing TCDCRS plans jeopardize access to and viability of the TCDCRS retirement plan for all Lamb County employees.

2.08 BASIS OF EMPLOYMENT

Elected Officials are responsible for the selection and determination of employment for new employees in their respective department. The Elected Official is also responsible for ensuring funds are budgeted and available to support employment prior to filling vacant positions.

2.09 CATEGORIES OF EMPLOYMENT

Each County position has an employee status which identifies how the position is paid and which benefits may be granted to the employee by the Commissioners Court. This policy defines both health insurance and retirement benefits. The status of an employee cannot be changed without approval from Commissioners Court.

Full time employees are eligible for health insurance. Pursuant to the Affordable Care Act (ACA), all employee classifications must be included in the County's initial and/or standard measurement periods.

Classification	Definition	Benefit Eligibility		Overtime/ Compensatory Time Eligibility ¹	
		Health Ins.	Retire-ment		
Regular Full Time	Normal work schedule is at least 30 hours per week	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Non-Exempt ² : Hourly: Exempt:	Yes Yes No
Regular (permanent) Part Time	Normal work schedule is less than 30 hours per week		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	If employee works over 40 hours in work week	
Temporary Seasonal (full or part time)	Works ≤ 6 months/year, starting around the same time each year. Season of work must be defined.				
Temporary Part Time ³	Works <30 hrs/week for set period of time or on a set project lasting <12 mos.				
Temporary Full Time ⁴	Works ≥30 hrs/week for set period of time or on set project lasting >12 mos.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

¹ Employees of the Lamb County Sherriff’s Office are eligible to accrue Overtime Pay. All other Lamb County employees are eligible to earn Compensatory Time.

² Lamb County makes exempt status determinations based on the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

³ Temp. Part Time: If the project goes beyond 12 mos., employee will move into regular part time status.

⁴ Temp. Full Time: If the project goes beyond 12 mos., employee will move into regular full-time status.

Other County and Departmental policies dictate employee eligibility for other benefits.

Elected and Appointed Officials do not necessarily meet other attributes of employment. They are considered full time and enjoy all benefits offered to regular employees, except for leave accrual.

Employees moving into a County-funded position from a separately-funded position or different County Department must resolve all accrued compensatory time prior to the effective start date of the position change. Funding for personal leave must be transferred to the appropriate receiving Department’s budget.

2.10 EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURES

- A. Vacancies should be posted as soon as possible. Elected Officials should provide job descriptions and minimum qualifications required for each vacant position.
- B. All applications and resumes for vacancies should be submitted to the County Treasurer’s Office.
- C. Applicants may be required to show proof of required licenses, training, certifications, or educational qualifications. Applicants are required to provide a copy of their state-issued/governmental identification card, and submit to a criminal background check.

- D. Applicants may be required to participate in job-specific testing (e.g., timed typing, spelling, reading, writing samples, etc.) to demonstrate qualification and eligibility for the position.
- E. Elected Officials should use the following selection process when hiring:
1. Review applications and resumes, and select candidates for interviews. Consideration must be given to all applications. However, interviews do not have to be given to all applicants.
 2. Reference checks should be conducted by the hiring Department prior to communicating a conditional offer of employment. A minimum of three reference checks are recommended, and the County Treasurer maintains a form to be utilized to conduct this procedure. Every effort should be made to determine the applicant's past history to ensure the best, most qualified applicants are hired.
 3. Lamb County may make a conditional offer of employment contingent upon results of drug screen and physical evaluation, at the discretion of the hiring Department. Some positions also require Driver's License checks and criminal background checks. Once these processes are completed, a formal job offer can be made, and a date may be established for the new employee to report to work.
 4. The Elected Official should submit a Payroll Change Notification Form for the selected candidate to the Treasurer's Office.
- F. Elected Officials should maintain a personnel file for each employee during the entire employment relationship. The County Treasurer will maintain a permanent personnel file for each employee.

2.11 TESTING

Elected Officials will determine any tests to be administered for employment or promotion. Tests will be specifically job-related (e.g., operating equipment, word processing, operating a computer, lifting an item, tabulating columns of numbers, or providing a writing sample). Reasonable accommodations will be made to qualified applicants with a disability. The request for such accommodation must be made in writing by the applicant in advance of a test.

2.12 DRIVING RECORD

Every County employee required to drive a County or personal vehicle on County business must maintain a safe driving record. For this reason, the County will check the driving record of a prospective employee applying for a job which requires operation of a County vehicle, or operation of a personal vehicle on County business.

The County will re-check an employee's driving record annually, and more often as needed, after employment is established. Poor driving records may result in a change in position, or other action up to and including termination.

2.13 CRIMINAL BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS

New hires and promotions require criminal background investigations. Criminal convictions may be grounds to not consider an applicant for hire or promotion.

2.14 PHYSICAL STANDARDS

- A. Applicants and employees in all classifications (whether full time, part time, temporary, or seasonal) may be required to successfully complete a physical examination. Applicants and employees who are candidates for promotion must first be informed of a conditional offer for the position/promotion, and then be sent for the examination. The hiring Department will make necessary arrangements for the examination.
- B. Where applicable, reasonable accommodations will be made for qualified persons with disabilities in accordance with the ADA.
- C. Physical standards and requirements may vary in accordance with the duties and working conditions required for various employment positions. The recommendation of the examining medical provider shall determine the suitability of any persons for employment in a specific position. Particular attention will be given to any impairment, degenerative disease, or other abnormality which would adversely affect the present capacity of a prospective employee or promotional candidate to perform the essential functions of a position.
- D. The examining medical provider will complete an evaluation of the candidate/employee and forward a comprehensive report to the County Treasurer's Office, indicating a specific recommendation as to the suitability of the person for employment in or promotion to the position. The County Treasurer will provide the form to be utilized by the medical provider

2.15 DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

A. General Policy

1. This policy applies to all employees of Lamb County, regardless of rank or position, and includes full time, part time, and temporary employees. Lamb County is a drug and alcohol-free workplace environment. A County employee may not be present at work during a period when the employee's ability to perform their duties is impaired by drugs or alcohol. The County believes that a drug and alcohol-free workplace will help ensure a safe, health, and secure work environment.
2. An employee may not unlawfully manufacture, distribute, dispense, possess, sell, purchase, or use a controlled substance, marijuana, dangerous drug, or drug paraphernalia on County property or while conducting County business not on County property. The only exception to this policy is to law enforcement personnel who are on duty, and conducting official law enforcement investigatory tasks.
3. No employee may be under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs while on County property or while on duty for the County.

4. No employee may use or possess any prescription medication not prescribed to the employee while on County property or while on duty for the County. Employees may not use any prescription or over the counter medication while on County property in any manner other than that intended by the manufacturer or prescribed by a physician, so long as use will not impair the employee's ability to do their job safely and effectively. All prescription medication used while on duty for the County must be stored and kept in its original container/packaging.
5. Employees taking prescribed medication are responsible for consulting the prescribing physician or a pharmacist to determine if the medication could interfere with the safe and effective performance of the employee's job duties. If the use of a medication could compromise an employee's ability to do their job safely, or the safety of the employee, fellow employees, or members of the public, the employee must report the risk to their Supervisor at the start of the workday or use appropriate personnel procedures (e.g. call in sick, use personal leave, request change of duty).
6. A Supervisor must treat any information related to an employee's authorized use of prescription medications, and any other medical information provided by the employee, as confidential information.
7. Any employee struggling with abuse or addiction to alcohol, or illicit or prescription drugs, is encouraged to seek treatment from a qualified professional. Information on benefits provided for treatment of alcohol and drug abuse and addiction provided by the County's health program is available in the employee health plan booklet, or from the County Treasurer's Office.

B. Violation of Policy

1. Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
2. Any employee who admits to illicit drug use may be terminated.
3. An employee who voluntarily asks for time off to obtain treatment and work towards recovery from a drug or alcohol abuse problem or addiction will be given protection as required by law. Upon returning to work from a bona fide inpatient treatment facility, the employee will be subjected to a volunteer drug testing program as often as monthly until there is evidence the employee no longer uses. Failure to comply with the requirements of the post-rehabilitative program, including refusing the volunteer drug testing program, will result in termination. The post-rehabilitative program will last for as long as two years. If, at any time during the post-rehabilitative program, the employee tests positive, or refuses a volunteer drug test, the employee will be terminated.

C. Drug and Alcohol Testing

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

Lamb County will drug test employees who ARE NOT Commercial Driver's License (CDL) holders under the following conditions:

1. Pre-Employment Drug Testing
 - a. Lamb County has a pre-employment drug testing requirement. The drug test must be passed after an offer of employment is made, but before the employee starts their first day of work.
 - b. All offers of employment are conditional upon the employee passing a drug and alcohol test. Every employee will sign a consent waiver.
2. Suspicion-Based Testing (Requires Supervisor Training)
 - a. "Under the Influence" shall be defined as having a blood alcohol concentration of .04 or more; or not having the normal use of mental or physical faculties by reason of the introduction of alcohol, a controlled substance, a drug, a dangerous drug, a combination of two or more of those substances, or any other substance into the body.
 - b. "Reasonable Suspicion" shall be defined as articulable facts which demonstrate an employee is having work performance issues, is displaying behavior which may be drug or alcohol-related, or is otherwise demonstrating conduct or behavior which may be violative of this drug and alcohol policy.
 - c. Where immediate action is necessary, an Elected Official or Supervisor who has reasonable suspicion to believe an employee is under the influence will require that employee to submit to a breath test or urinalysis.
 - d. The following conditions can support a belief that an employee is under the influence, but is not an exhaustive list:

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

3. Elected Officials and Supervisors who have observed one or more of the above-listed conditions and have reasonable suspicion that substance abuse is causing the conditions and/or affecting the employee's work performance or behavior shall take the following steps:
 - a. Confront the employee involved and keep them under direct observation until the situation is resolved. Inform the employee of the problem with their work performance and specific violations of the County policy.
 - b. If, after observing or talking to the employee, the Supervisor believes the conduct or performance issue(s) could be due to substance abuse, the employee will be immediately required to submit to a breath test or urinalysis. If the employee refuses to submit to testing for any reason, the employee may be terminated.
 - c. The employee will be asked to release any evidence, such as alcohol or drug paraphernalia, for further testing. Failure to comply with this request may subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination. All confiscated evidence will be receipted for, with signatures from both the employee and the Elected Official or Supervisor.
 - d. The Elected Official or Supervisor will remove the employee from the County work station, and ensure the employee is transported to an appropriate test sample collection site and thereafter to the employee's residence. Under no circumstances will the employee be allowed to drive a vehicle until a confirmed negative test result is received.
 - e. The Elected Official or Supervisor shall, within 24 hours of the test's administration or before the results of any testing are released, document the particular facts related to the behavior or work performance issues observed, and present such documentation to the County Treasurer for filing in the employee's permanent personnel file.
4. Post-Accident Testing
 - a. All employees directly involved in an on-the-job accident, or incident resulting in property damage and/or medical treatment may be required to submit to drug and alcohol testing. This is at the discretion of the Elected Official or Supervisor.
 - b. *Testing Procedures*
 - i. The employee will be escorted and driven to the designated facility for specimen collection and/or testing.
 - ii. The employee will be required to follow the drug testing protocol of the medical facility providing testing.

- iii. If the employee desires another test be given, the employee may submit to additional independent testing within 2 hours of the specimen collected for the County, and the specimen will be considered by the County. The cost of this additional test will be paid for by the employee. All costs of initial testing will be paid for by Lamb County.
- iv. The employee will be placed on administrative leave until the results of the test are released. The Elected Official or Supervisor will make arrangements to ensure the employee is safely returned to the employee's residence.
- v. Under no circumstances will alcohol or drug testing information be released unless required or authorized by law, or with written consent from the employee.

Lamb County will drug test employees who ARE Commercial Driver's License (CDL) holders under the following conditions:

1. CDL Drivers are an extremely valuable resource for Lamb County's business. Their health and safety is a serious County concern. Drug and alcohol use poses a serious threat to driver health and safety. It is, therefore, the policy of the County to prohibit CDL employees from being under the influence of or using illegal drugs or alcohol during working hours.
2. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration ("FMCSA") has issued regulations which require the County to implement a controlled substance testing program. The County will comply with these requirements, and is committed to maintaining a drug-free workplace.
3. All CDL drivers are advised that remaining drug-free and medically qualified to drive are conditions of continued employment with the County.
4. Specifically, it is the policy of Lamb County that the use, sale, purchase, transfer, possession or presence in an employee's body of any controlled substance (except medically-prescribed drugs) or alcohol by any CDL driver while on County premises, engaged in County business, while operating County equipment, or while under the authority of the County is strictly prohibited.
5. FMCSA requires that mandatory testing applies to every person who operates a commercial motor vehicle in interstate or intrastate commerce and is subject to the CDL licensing requirement. Lamb County will conduct pre-employment, random, reasonable suspicion, and post-accident drug testing in accordance with federal law.

6. The execution and enforcement of this policy will follow set procedures to screen body fluids (urinalysis), conduct breath testing, and/or search all driver applicants for alcohol and drug use, and those drivers suspected of violating this policy who are involved in a U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) reportable accident, or who are periodically or randomly selected pursuant to these procedures. These procedures are designed not only to detect violations of this policy, but to ensure fairness to each driver. Every effort will be made to maintain the dignity of drivers or driver applicants.
 7. It is the policy of Lamb County to utilize and comply with reporting requirements to the DOT FMCSA Clearinghouse, a secure online database that provides employers with real-time information about CDL driver drug and alcohol program violations.
 8. Lamb County will conduct both electronic queries and traditional manual queries as required by FMCSA's drug and alcohol use testing program, for the purpose of checking CDL driver violation histories. Drivers may also view their own records. Employee CDL Holders are required to provide a consent form to allow the County to conduct both Limited and Specific inquiries.
 9. The "Lamb County CDL Drug and Alcohol Testing Policies and Procedures," a more detailed explanation of the County's policies and procedures for testing of CDL holders, is available at the County Treasurer's Office upon request.
- D. Each employee is expected to cooperate and consent to a drug/alcohol test when requested, under the terms of this policy. Refusal to consent to testing when requested is cause for termination.
- E. Any employee who violates this drug and alcohol testing policy shall be terminated.

2.16 ORIENTATION

- A. New employee orientation is conducted by the Treasurer's Office, and is designed to introduce new employees to the County organization. The information given in new employee orientation is general, and designed to apply to all Lamb County employees. Orientation includes completion of paperwork, provision of information regarding benefits, receipt of information and formal acknowledgment of County policies.
- B. The hiring Department is responsible for scheduling orientation for each new employee. Employees who fail to complete the orientation paperwork process will not be entered into the payroll system until orientation is complete.
- C. New employees are advised to meet with their Supervisor for specific information regarding departmental policies including any applicable privacy/confidentiality policies, rules, regulations, guidelines, etc.

2.17 VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY TO WORK

In order to comply with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, each new employee is required to complete and sign an INS Form I-9 on the first day of employment, to provide proof of the employee's identity and employment eligibility.

2.18 FRAUDULENT APPLICATION

Submission of false information on the employment application, resume, employment tests, or any other documentation or paperwork required for employment with Lamb County is grounds for disqualification and termination.

2.19 APPLICATION SUBJECT TO PUBLIC INFORMATION ACCESS

Non-exempt public information contained in applications for employment and resumes may be subject to release to the public pursuant to the Texas Public Information Act.

The Treasurer's Office maintains a policy of loss prevention and mitigation of any illegitimate/illegal access to or use of employee information. This policy is available for review upon request.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

3.01 GENERAL CONDUCT

The County is a public, tax-supported governmental entity. Our employees must adhere to high standards of public service that emphasize professionalism, courtesy, and avoid the appearance of illegal or unethical conduct at all times. Employees are expected to give a full day's work, to efficiently perform the work assigned, and to maintain good relationships with the public, their supervisors, other employees and officials.

3.02 PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE

A. Employees of the County are hired to provide services to our citizens and to perform specific tasks in a professional manner. As representatives of the County, employees are required to set and meet high standards both in performing quality work and in presenting a professional personal image to the public. Employees will maintain standards of personal grooming as specified by their position and Elected Official. In order to assist employees in determining what is appropriate, the following guidelines have been established:

1. Personal cleanliness is required by all. In general, employees should be neat and wear conservative and well-fitted clothing appropriate to their scope of job responsibilities.
2. Employees who are provided uniforms will follow departmental policies regarding wear and care. Appropriate personal protective equipment and safety gear will be worn as required.
3. Employees in office settings with high public visibility and contact will wear appropriate professional attire. Dress, hairstyle and grooming should be conservative and appropriate for business hours.
4. Body jewelry and adornment other than conservative necklaces, earrings, rings, watches and bracelets are not allowed. This includes, but is not limited to, nose rings, lip rings, tongue studs or excessive earrings.

3.03 PUNCTUALITY AND ATTENDANCE

- A. Employees are to be punctual in reporting for work, training, keeping appointments, and meeting schedules for completion of work. An employee who anticipates being late for, or absent from, work must report the expected tardiness or absence to their Elected Official or Supervisor.
- B. Failure to report within the required period of time as determined by the Elected Official or Supervisor may be cause for disallowing paid leave for an absence. Unless otherwise approved by the Elected Official or Supervisor, employees are expected to call on each day of absence. Where the nature of the absence necessitates an extended period of time off, longer reporting intervals may be approved by the Elected Official or Supervisor.

- C. Frequent tardiness or unexcused absence of one work day or more is not permissible and is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

3.04 CURRENT CONTACT INFORMATION

Employees shall provide their Elected Official, Supervisor, and the Treasurer's Office with the employee's current physical/ mailing address and telephone contact information within one week of any change.

3.05 OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

- A. Employees may not engage in any outside employment, business activity, or enterprise which may pose a conflict of interest with the job duties determined by the Elected Official, or which affect the employee's work performance adversely.
- B. Employees employed in secondary employment in addition to working for Lamb County must obtain written permission from their Elected Official. Outside employment which interferes with County work performance or is found to be incompatible will not be permitted. Any written authorization for secondary employment should be on file with the County Treasurer, who will retain the documentation in the employee's permanent personnel file.
- C. If a County employee is injured on the job in the course of employment other than employment for Lamb County, the employee cannot file a worker's compensation claim with the County for benefits related to the injury. A claim should be made through the secondary employer. A false report of injury will be investigated and prosecuted. False reports are grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

3.06 POLITICAL ACTIVITY

- A. Employees of Lamb County shall have the right to support political candidates of their choice, and to engage in political activity during their personal time.
- B. County employees shall not:
 - 1. Use their official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the result of any election or nomination for office;
 - 2. Directly or indirectly coerce, attempt to coerce, command, or advise another person to pay, lend or contribute anything of value to a political party, committee, organization, agency, or person for a political purpose; or
 - 3. Use any County equipment, property, or material for any political activity, or engage in political activity while on duty for the County.

3.07 GIFTS AND GRATUITIES

A County employee may not solicit or accept any gift (including a free service) that may influence, or give the appearance of influencing, their official actions, or impair their independence of judgment in the performance of work duties for the County. County employees may not engage in any activity, practice, or conduct which conflicts with or appears to conflict with the interests of the County.

3.08 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- A. Employees of Lamb County shall not engage in any secondary employment, relationship, or activity which (1) could be viewed as a conflict of interest because of the potential to or appearance of affecting the employee's job efficiency; (2) could reduce the employee's ability to make objective decisions in regard to their work and responsibility as a Lamb County employee.
- B. Any employee involved in a situation which is determined to be a conflict of interest by their Elected Official shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination, and the following actions may also result in criminal consequences for employees:
 - 1. Soliciting, accepting, or agreeing to accept a financial benefit, gift, or favor, other than from the County, that might reasonably tend to influence the employee's performance of duties for the County or that the employee knows or should know is offered with the intent to influence the employee's work 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 County duties;
 - 3. Accepting outside/secondary employment, compensation, gifts, or favors that might reasonably tend to impair independent judgment in performance of duties for the County;
 - 4. Making any personal investment that might reasonably be expected to create a substantial conflict between the employee's private interest and the employee's duties for the County; or
 - 5. Soliciting, accepting, or agreeing to accept a financial benefit from another person in exchange for having performed duties as a County employee in favor of that person.

3.09 PERSONAL ITEMS AND WORKSPACE

- A. County employees are allowed to have personal items in their workspace as approved by their Elected Official and Supervisor. Personal items that are stolen, damaged, lost or destroyed in the workplace are not the responsibility of Lamb County, and will not be repaired or replaced by Lamb County.
- B. The workspace provided to each employee is expected to be kept clean, neat, and orderly. Employees are to maintain a professional workspace with a user-friendly appearance. All County workspaces are to be organized and employees should always be mindful of all applicable privacy and confidentiality laws, rules, guidelines, regulations, and policies in their workspaces.
- C. Employees maintain no expectation of privacy in their work spaces or at their work stations.

3.10 MEDIA RELATIONS

Any telephone calls, electronic mail messages, or in-person requests from media outlets for comment regarding County business or anything related to a Lamb County Department shall be referred to the Elected Official.

3.11 TELEPHONE USE

- A. Lamb County provides office telephone service for County-related business. Elected Officials have discretion to allow incidental personal use of office telephones. Lamb County's long distance telephone service is for County business only.
- B. Lamb County provides cellular telephones for some County employees as designated by Elected Officials. Cellular telephones provided by Lamb County are County property and are intended for County business use only. Lamb County may also provide a cellular telephone allowance to some employees who are required to use their personal cellular telephone for County business. The amount of the cellular telephone allowance is determined by the Commissioners Court on an annual basis.
 1. Elected Officials have discretion to allow for minimal, incidental personal use of cellular telephones.
 2. Lamb County may assign or change cellular telephone rate plans, depending on which are more appropriate or economical for a particular use or Department.
 3. Employees shall immediately notify their Elected Official if a County-issued cellular telephone is lost, damaged, or stolen. Employees are responsible for the cost of replacement/repair of damaged, stolen, or lost County cellular telephones due to employee negligence. Employees in possession of a County-owned cellular telephone are required to take appropriate precautions to prevent theft and vandalism.
 4. Elected Officials shall provide periodic updated cellular telephone assignment lists to the County Auditor's Office to ensure inventory control and billing accuracy.
 5. Use of any cellular telephone to conduct County business, whether on a County-owned cellular telephone or an employee's personal cellular telephone, could subject the contents of the cellular telephone to disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act.

3.12 SOLICITATION

- A. The posting of any materials on County bulletin boards by employees must be approved in advance by the County Judge. The posting of any materials on Departmental bulletin boards by employees must be approved by the Elected Official.

- B. Solicitation, distribution, or circulation of any for-profit materials by employees during their County work time or during the working time of the employees to whom such activities are directed is subject to approval by the Elected Official.
- C. Lamb County supports its employees' efforts to raise funds on behalf of non-profit organizations and the schools and community organizations to which employees and their families belong. Employees may solicit on Lamb County premises for such purposes with prior approval from their Elected Official, during times when they are not on duty for the County. On duty time includes the working time of both the employee doing the solicitation/distribution/circulation, and the employee(s) to whom it is directed.

3.13 SOCIAL MEDIA

- A. "Social Media" includes, but is not limited to: online forums, blogs, and social networking sites (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.).
- B. Lamb County recognizes the importance of social media for its employees. However, use of social media by employees may become a problem that leads to disciplinary action up to and including termination if its use:
 - 1. Interferes with an employee's work performance;
 - 2. Is used to harass supervisors, co-workers, customers, or vendors;
 - 3. Creates a hostile work environment; or
 - 4. Harms the good will and reputation of Lamb County amongst the community at large.
- C. Lamb 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 an employee is uncertain about the appropriateness of a social media posting/comment, the employee is encouraged to consult with their Elected Official.
- D. **Social Media Guidelines**
 - 1. If an employee makes a post, or intends to make a post, on social media that mentions Lamb County, the employee should make clear that they are an employee of Lamb County and that the views posted are the employee's alone and do not represent the views of Lamb County.
 - 2. Employees are not to mention or post photographs or videos of Lamb County Elected Officials, Supervisors, employees, customers, or vendors without their express consent.

3. Employees should not pick fights on social media. If an employee discovers another party/person has posted a misrepresentation about Lamb County, the employee is to advise their Elected Official.
 4. Employees should always remember they are responsible for what they write, present, and post on social media. Employees may be subject to being sued by other employees, Supervisors, customers, vendors, or any individual who views an employee's post as defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous, or as creating a hostile work environment.
 5. 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.
 6. Employees may not use Lamb County computer equipment for non-work-related activities without written permission from their Elected Official or Supervisor. Social media activities should not interfere with an employee's work duties. Lamb County monitors its computers to ensure compliance with this policy.
 7. Employees must comply with copyright laws, and accurately cite or reference any sources used.
 8. Employees are not to link to Lamb County's website, or to post Lamb County's material on any social media platform without written permission from their Elected Official or Supervisor.
 9. All Lamb County policies regulating off-duty conduct also apply to social media activity, including but not limited to policies related to illegal harassment, code of conduct, and drug and alcohol use.
 10. Any confidential information an employee obtains through their position at Lamb County must be kept confidential and should not be discussed on any social media platform.
- E. Violation of this policy in any form may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

3.14 INDEBTEDNESS TO THE COUNTY

If an employee is indebted to the County, the County may not issue a paycheck, or may reduce the amount of the employee's paycheck, to the extent of the debt owed unless other arrangements have been made through the County Treasurer's Office. If an employee is separated from Lamb County and is indebted to the County, the employee is not eligible for rehire with the County until the debt has been paid.

3.15 CONFIDENTIALITY

- A. Lamb County is a public entity, but some County employees acquire confidential, private information as a result of their position with the County. This information must be protected. Employees who reveal confidential information will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.
- B. Every employee is required to sign an Acknowledgment of Privacy and Confidentiality Policies. Employees are responsible for reading, educating themselves, and complying with applicable privacy/confidentiality rules, laws, guidelines, regulations, and policies of the Department for which the employee works.
- C. Certain personnel information regarding employees of Lamb County is subject to disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act (e.g., salary, job evaluations, etc.). Highly personal matters are not typically subject to disclosure. The County will adhere to the requirements of disclosure mandated by law.

3.16 RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE TEXAS PUBLIC INFORMATION ACT

All written requests for public information must be taken immediately to the employee's Elected Official, Department Head, or to the County Attorney. Requests for information under the Texas Public Information Act (PIA) are extremely time-sensitive, and if any Department is delayed in responding, the County could be required by the Texas Attorney General's Office to disclose information which should otherwise be confidential and private. Any questions regarding the PIA and how it should be interpreted must be made in writing to the County Attorney's Office.

3.17 LITIGATION NOTICES

Employees shall immediately notify their Elected Official and the County Attorney's Office if they are served with a copy of any work-related lawsuits or demand letters.

3.18 CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

County employees who are arrested, charged with or indicted for, or convicted of illegal behavior must notify their Elected Official immediately. Continued employment will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the employee's Elected Official.

3.19 CHAIN OF COMMAND AND COMMUNICATIONS

Individual County employees are responsible to their Elected Official or Supervisor. Directions regarding work to be done, expected results, and the adequacy of work performance follow the chain of command. Elected Officials and Supervisors are prohibited from pressuring a subordinate into violating County policy.

3.20 GRIEVANCES

- A. Any employee who has a grievance related to the employee's job should discuss the grievance with their immediate Supervisor.

- B. If discussion with the immediate Supervisor does not resolve the grievance, and if the immediate Supervisor is not the Elected Official with final responsibility for the employee's Department, the employee shall have the right to discuss the grievance with that Official.
- C. The decision of the Elected Official with final responsibility for the employee's Department shall be final in all grievances.

3.21 WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION

- A. An employee may, in good faith, report an alleged violation of Lamb County policy or state or federal law to the employee's Elected Official or Supervisor, unless all of these persons are the alleged perpetrators of the alleged violation of policy or law. If all of the listed persons are alleged to be involved in the violation, the employee should report the allegation to the County Judge and/or County Attorney. The County will investigate the reported violation(s).
- B. Elected Officials, Supervisors, and employees are prohibited from taking adverse employment action against an employee who, in good faith, reported an alleged violation of County policy or state or federal law to a designated person, pursuant to this policy. An employee who, in good faith, believes they are being or have been subjected to retaliation based on a report of alleged wrongdoing under this policy should immediately contact the County Judge and/or County Attorney.
- C. An employee who intentionally makes a false report of wrongdoing will be subject to discipline up to and including termination. Additionally, any employee who makes a false report is subject to criminal prosecution.
- D. An employee with any question regarding this policy should contact the County Judge.

3.22 WEAPONS ON COUNTY PROPERTY

- A. Lamb County policy prohibits possession of handguns or weapons of any kind on County property (including buildings, parking lots, and vehicles), except when carried by commissioned law enforcement officers or possessed/carried by employees holding a valid License to Carry a Handgun.
- B. Any employee who intends to carry on County property must have permission of their Elected Official.
- C. All employees who possess or obtain a License to Carry a Handgun, and who have secured permission to carry a handgun on County property must provide a copy of the license to their Elected Official. Elected Officials shall forward a copy of each License to Carry to the County Judge and the Sheriff. The Sheriff and County Judge will maintain a list of all employees who possess a License to Carry a Handgun.

3.23 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

- A. Lamb County is committed to providing a workplace free of violence. Lamb County will not tolerate or condone violence of any kind in the workplace. The County will not tolerate or condone any threats of violence, direct or indirect, including jokes. All threats will be taken seriously, and will be investigated.
- B. Employees must refrain from engaging in any conduct or making any comment that could make another employee suspicious or in fear for their safety. Employees are required to report all suspicious conduct or comments to their immediate supervisor.
- C. Employees should be aware of their surroundings at all times and should report any suspicious behavior from the public, former employees, or other County employees to their immediate supervisor or to the Sheriff's Department.
- D. No employee may possess a firearm or other weapon other than authorized law enforcement officials or those who have complied with this policy's requirements regarding holders of Licenses to Carry Handguns.
- E. If employees believe any person is violating this policy, the employee should immediately report to their immediate supervisor or to the Sheriff's Department. Employees found in violation of this policy are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

WORK SCHEDULE & TIME REPORTING

4.01 WORKWEEK AND WORK HOURS

- A. The official work period for most County employees is the specified number of hours in a seven-day period, beginning at 12:01am on Saturday, and ending at 12:00 midnight on the following Friday.
- B. Normal working hours will be determined by Elected Officials. Official County business hours, except in correctional facilities, are 8:30am to 5:00pm, Monday through Friday. However, normal working hours may be altered by special events (e.g. noon/evening meetings, conferences, holidays, etc.). Earned leave, compensatory time, overtime, and pay will be calculated on this cycle.
 1. Sheriff's Office dispatchers and office deputies, and Road and Bridge staff are required to work a minimum of forty (40) hours in the seven day work period.
 2. Commissioned law enforcement and jail staff are required to work up to eighty-six (86) hours in a fourteen-day work period.
 3. All other full time County employees are required to work a minimum of thirty-seven and a half (37.5) hours in the seven-day work period.
 4. All other part time County employees are subject to the hours allowed per the Elected Official or Supervisor, working a maximum of twenty-nine (29) hours per seven-day work period.
- C. Some County employees work a fourteen-day work period. The work period begins on Saturday at 12:01am, and ends on Friday at 12:00 midnight for two weeks. In the event that a work period begins on Friday, that shift will carry over and be counted as if completed during the work period in which it began. Employees scheduled on a fourteen-day work period are notified by their Elected Official. Earned leave, overtime, and pay will be calculated on this cycle.
- D. Employees are expected to report punctually for duty at the beginning of each assigned workday, and to work the full work period established.
- E. Absence from the workplace during assigned work hours should be charged to appropriate leave except when out on County business.

4.02 SCHEDULE ADJUSTMENTS

- A. Adjustments to normal hours of operation may be made by the Elected Official in order to better serve the public.
- B. Offices may remain open during the noon hour, and lunch periods for some employees may be staggered, according to specified requirements. Offices mandated by law to remain open during the noon hour shall remain open as required.
- C. Some Departments may allow or schedule break periods for employees. Break periods are not required by law and are given at the discretion of the Elected Official.

- D. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act amended the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) to require reasonable breaks be given to nursing mothers to express breastmilk. 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 breastmilk. Lamb County supports the practice of expressing breastmilk.
1. Lamb County will provide reasonable paid breaks for a nursing mother to express breastmilk. The nursing mother will be allowed whatever time is needed to express breastmilk.
 2. The County will provide the nursing mother with a private location, other than a bathroom, in which to express breastmilk. The location will be shielded from view, free from intrusion, and appropriate for expressing breastmilk. The specific location will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
 3. Lamb County prohibits any retaliation against a nursing mother for asking for this break. Nursing mothers are entitled to have this break for the duration of time they are expressing breastmilk. A reasonable accommodation will be given for the needs of employees who express breastmilk. An employee of the County who needs to express breastmilk will not be discriminated against.

All other employee breaks are determined by each Elected Official, and are not required to be given. If a County Department provides breaks to employees, it may not be accumulated or used for time off. The FLSA does not require any breaks be given, 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.

E. Non-Exempt Employee Policies

1. Non-exempt Employees must maintain an accurate record of the total hours worked each day. It is the responsibility of each employee to verify the time sheets submitted are correct. The employee's time card must accurately reflect all regular and overtime/compensatory time hours; any absences, late arrivals, early departures, and meal breaks. Employees should not sign a time card if it is not accurate.
2. When employees receive a pay check, they should verify immediately that it reflects correct payment for all regular and overtime/compensatory hours worked each week.
3. Non-exempt employees should not work any unauthorized hours unless expressly authorized by their Supervisor. Employees are not to start work early, finish work late, work during a meal break, or perform any other extra or overtime work unless expressly authorized to do so. That time worked is to be recorded on the employee's time card.

4. Employees are prohibited from performing any “off-the-clock” work. “Off the clock” means work performed but not reported on a time card. Any employee who fails to report or inaccurately reports any hours worked will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. If any employee is directed to work without documenting time worked, the employee must notify the County Treasurer.
5. It is a violation of Lamb County policy for any employee to falsify a time card, or to alter another employee’s time card. It is also a serious violation of County policy for any employee, Supervisor or Elected Official to instruct another employee to incorrectly or falsely report hours worked, or to alter another employee’s time card to under or over report hours worked. If an employee is instructed to incorrectly or falsely under or over report hours worked, or to alter another employee’s time records to inaccurately or falsely report hours worked, the employee should immediately report this to the County Treasurer.

F. Exempt Employee Policies

1. Exempt (salaried) employees receive a salary which is intended to compensate them for all hours worked for the County. This salary is established at the time of hire or when the employee is classified as “exempt.” While it may be subject to review and modification from time to time, the salary will be a pre-determined amount that will not be subject to deductions for variations in the quantity or quality of the work performed.
2. Exempt employee salaries may be reduced for certain types of deductions (e.g. the employee’s portion of health, dental, or life insurance premiums; state, federal, or local taxes; social security, retirement, or voluntary contributions to a deferred compensation plan).
3. In any workweek during which an exempt employee performed any work, the employee’s wages may be reduced for any of the following reasons:
 - a. Absence from work for one or more full days for personal reasons, other than sickness or disability;
 - b. Full day disciplinary suspensions or infractions of the County’s written policies and procedures;
 - c. Full day suspension for violated safety rules of major significance;
 - d. Family and Medical Leave or Military Leave absences;
 - e. To offset amounts received as payment for jury and witness fees or military pay; or
 - f. The first or last week of employment in the event the employee works less than a full week.

4. In any workweek during which an exempt employee performed any work, the employee's wages will not be reduced for the following reasons:
 - a. Partial day absences for personal reasons, sickness, or disability;
 - b. Because the facility is closed on a scheduled work day;
 - c. Because of the County's operating requirements;
 - d. Absences for jury duty, attendance as a witness, or military leave in any week in which any work has been performed; or
 - e. Any other deductions prohibited by state or federal law.
- G. It is not an improper deduction to reduce an employee's accrued vacation, personal or other forms of paid time off for full or partial day absences for personal reasons, sickness, or disability.
- H. **Grievances Regarding Pay**
 1. All employees should review their pay stubs upon receipt to ensure the information contained therein is correct.
 2. Lamb County makes every effort to pay its employees correctly. Occasionally, however, inadvertent mistakes can happen. When mistakes are made, and are called to the County Treasurer's attention, the County will investigate and make any corrections necessary.
 3. Any employee with questions regarding pay should immediately contact their Elected Official or Supervisor.
 4. If an employee believes they have been subject to any improper deductions or that the pay does not accurately reflect hours worked, the employee should immediately report the matter to the County Treasurer. If an employee is overpaid, the County will make necessary corrections at the next payroll.
 5. If the employee is unsure of who to contact, or if the employee has not received a satisfactory response within five (5) business days after reporting the incident, the County Attorney should be contacted in writing. The written complaint should include the employee's full name, address, and telephone number.
 6. Every report will be fully investigated and corrective action will be taken where appropriate.
- I. **Violations of Policy**
 1. Any violation of this policy subjects an employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
 2. The County will not allow any form of retaliation against any individual who reports alleged violations of this policy or who cooperates in the County's investigation of such reports. Retaliation is unacceptable, and any form of retaliation in violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

4.03 OVERTIME COMPENSATION

The policy of Lamb County is to keep overtime hours worked to a minimum. Occasionally, employees may be required to provide services in addition to normal work hours, on weekends, or on holidays.

A. Eligibility for Overtime Pay

1. Under the FLSA, only non-exempt employees are eligible to accrue overtime pay.
2. Except in cases of emergency or disaster declared formally by federal, state, or county government(s), neither Elected Officials nor other positions determined by law and authorized by the Elected Official are eligible to receive overtime compensation.
 - a. In a state of emergency or disaster, overtime services rendered for Lamb County by exempt employees (and relating to the declared disaster/emergency) will be compensated in the same manner as non-exempt employees, after overtime expenses are reimbursed to Lamb County by the entity requiring the overtime services.
3. Exempt employees and Elected Officials are expected to render necessary and reasonable overtime services with no additional compensation.
4. Except in emergency situations, all overtime worked by non-exempt employees must be pre-approved by the employee's Elected Official or the Elected Official's designee.
5. Employees who work overtime without prior approval are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

B. Calculation of Overtime Pay

1. "Overtime" is defined as hours worked in excess of the allowable number of hours under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA): forty (40) hours per seven (7) day work period, or eighty-six (86) hours for employees in a fourteen (14) day work period; exceptions apply for law enforcement employees (see policies on law enforcement pay and overtime, found in Section 7).
2. Non-exempt employees accrue overtime at the forty-first (41st) hour worked during the seven-day work period, or the eighty-seventh (87th) hour worked during the fourteen-day work period.
3. Paid leave shall not be counted in determining whether an employee has worked overtime in any work period.

C. Compensation for Accrued Overtime

1. Overtime compensation shall be paid in the form of compensatory time off in accordance with the provisions of the FLSA. Covered employees shall receive paid compensatory time off at a rate of one and one-half (1 ½) times the amount of overtime worked.

2. Employees are permitted to accrue no more than 240 hours of unused compensatory time. (Law enforcement employees are permitted 80 hours maximum accrual.) Once an employee has reached accrual of maximum compensatory time, any additional overtime worked shall be compensated at a rate of one and one half (1 ½) of the employee's regular rate of pay until compensatory time has been exhausted, to bring the balance of hours below the maximum.
3. Employees are permitted to use earned compensatory time within a reasonable period from when it is earned if requested, provided the employee's absence will not place an undue hardship on the operations of the Department in which the employee works. Compensatory time may be used for any purpose desired by the employee, with Supervisor approval. Lamb County shall have the right to require employees to use earned compensatory time at the convenience and discretion of the County.
4. Employees are responsible for recording any compensatory time used within a pay period on the time sheet for that pay period.
5. Pursuant to FLSA requirements, any employee who separates employment with Lamb County (for any reason) prior to using all earned FLSA compensatory time shall be paid for any unused compensatory time accrued. (See Section 3.14 regarding how indebtedness to the County impacts payroll; Section 7 discusses other leave benefits and how compensatory time factors into use of those benefits.)
6. Lamb County retains the right to "buy back" all or part of an employee's unused compensatory time by paying the employee for that time accrued at the employee's current regular rate. Lamb County retains the right to pay all or part of the overtime worked in any work period by paying for the overtime services rendered at one and one-half (1 ½) the employee's regular rate of pay.

4.04 HOLIDAYS WORKED

The County's policy is that each regular full-time employee receives a specified number of paid holidays per year, as set annually by the Commissioners Court. In most instances, if a regular full-time employee (except essential law enforcement employees) is required to work on a scheduled holiday, the employee will be given an alternative day off, within one month, preferably within the same pay period. (See Section 7 for more detail concerning this policy.)

4.05 TIME REPORTING

- A. All employees eligible for leave will keep records of all hours worked and leave time taken, and where appropriate, hours credited to particular projects. Time sheets for this purpose are provided by the County Treasurer.
- B. Time sheets should be filled out after each day's work, to maintain an accurate and comprehensive record of actual time worked. Each employee required to complete a time sheet must turn it in to their supervisor on the last day of each pay period.

- C. Time records must be signed by the employee and their Elected Official or the Elected Official's designee. Elected Officials are responsible for ensuring time sheets submitted reflect actual hours worked and leave time used. Employee payment is based on worked hours reported.
- D. Time sheets prepared by the employee will show an accurate record of all time worked and leave taken, whether paid or unpaid, for the pay period. Time sheets are governmental records. As such, employees are required to complete them truthfully and correctly. Falsifying a time sheet is a criminal offense. Any employee who falsifies a time sheet is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- E. Time sheets are to be turned into the County Treasurer no later than 10:00am on the Tuesday following the end of the pay period. The Treasurer will maintain time sheets for four (4) years.
- F. Failure to submit time sheets in a timely fashion will result in delayed payment. Failure to submit a time sheet may result in an employee receiving only minimum wage payment until a proper and complete time sheet is submitted to the County Treasurer. Any necessary corrections will not be made until the next regularly scheduled payroll.

COMPENSATION & TRAVEL

5.01 WAGES

The personnel budgets for each Department are set each year by the Commissioners Court in Lamb County's adopted budget. Any new position must be approved by the Commissioners Court prior to the position being filled. The Commissioners Court will set the salary for any new position.

5.02 COMPENSATION

- A. Lamb County Commissioners Court sets maximum compensation for each employee annually, in accordance with state law. Lamb County complies with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) as outlined in the Fair Labor Standards Safe Harbor policy.
- B. All non-exempt County employees will be paid an hourly wage.
- C. Temporary employees will be paid hourly, at least the minimum wage established by the FLSA.

5.03 PAYDAYS

The County's pay period is bi-weekly. The pay date is every other Wednesday for the preceding pay period. If the pay day falls on a holiday, pay will be issued on the last working day preceding the holiday.

5.04 PAYROLL DELIVERY

- A. Direct deposit is mandatory for all County employees, unless approved by the County Treasurer. Direct Deposit Authorization Forms are available from the County Treasurer.
- B. No salary advances or loans against future salary will be made to any employee for any reason.

5.05 PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

- A. Deductions will be made from each employee's paycheck for federal withholding, social security contribution, Medicare contribution, and any other deductions required by law. Employees eligible for membership in the Texas County and District Retirement System will have their contributions to that system deducted from each paycheck. Any optional deduction authorized by the Commissioners Court and approved by the employee will also be made from the employee's paycheck.
- B. No optional deduction will be made from an employee's paycheck unless the employee submits a written authorization for the deduction to the County Treasurer. Employees may authorize deductions for:
 - 1. Group health/medical, life, or dental premiums for the employee and the employee's dependents;
 - 2. Credit union;

3. Deferred compensation;
 4. Repayment of debt to Lamb County; County reimbursement for travel advances (if a Travel Report has not been timely completed); or
 5. Other deductions as may be authorized by the Commissioners Court.
- C. If an employee's family status, address, or other factor affecting payroll withholding changes, the employee is responsible for obtaining, completing, and returning appropriate forms reflecting and communicating the change(s) to the County Treasurer within one week of any change.

5.06 BUSINESS EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

- A. Employees are expected to exercise the same care in incurring business expenses as any prudent person traveling for personal reasons.
- B. Employees required to travel or use their personal vehicles on County business will be advanced or reimbursed for authorized expenses only. Employees are responsible for submitting a Travel Advance/Reimbursement Form for travel advances or reimbursement.
- C. **Out of State Travel**
1. Commissioners Court must pre-approve all overnight, out of state travel.
 2. Transportation of prisoners and juvenile probationers does not require prior approval.
- D. **Travel Advance Requests**
1. If an employee requires a travel advance, the individual employee must submit a Travel Advance/Reimbursement Form signed by the employee's Elected Official prior to the travel. Employees are responsible for attaching supporting documentation to each request.
 2. Requests must be submitted to the County Auditor's Office according to the accounts payable payment schedule to ensure payment advance prior to travel.
- E. **Travel Reimbursement**
1. Within ten (10) working days of returning from travel, a Travel Report must be submitted to the County Auditor. Employees must attach supporting documentation for the expenditures the employee seeks to have reimbursed to the Form. The Auditor will not approve expenditures determined to be unsupported or unreasonable. Proper documentation in support includes (but is not limited to) brochures, fliers, etc.
 2. Receipts are required on the following authorized expenses:
 - a. Lodging;
 - b. Registration and seminar fees; and

- c. Commercial airline tickets, rental vehicles, limousine service to and from airport(s), bus station or other transporting terminal, and parking and taxi fares.
3. Lodging upgrades or additions to accommodate family members will not be reimbursed by the County.
4. *Mileage Reimbursement*
 - a. Employees may be reimbursed for mileage for personal automobile usage for both in and out of County travel.
 - b. Mileage reimbursement will be calculated using either MapQuest or Google Maps websites, and is paid on the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rate. The mileage rate is subject to change during the fiscal cycle.
 - c. Mileage is not an allowable advancement expense.
 - d. Employees requesting mileage reimbursement must have a valid current Texas Driver's License.
 - e. Mileage reimbursement requests must be submitted monthly, on forms available in the County Auditor's Office. An accurate listing of mileage, dates, times, odometer readings, and location is required.
 - f. Only one employee is eligible for mileage reimbursement in the event more than one County employee travels in one personal vehicle.
 - g. Sharing mileage costs with a Texas County employee from another jurisdiction may be reimbursed up to one half (½) the total allowable mileage.
 - h. Auto rental is only authorized when used in conjunction with a related airline flight or when four or more County employees travel together in a single multi-passenger vehicle (e.g. vans or SUVs). Employees are encouraged to take advantage of governmental discounts or any other special rates offered by rental agencies. Rental vehicles are available for County-related business only. Employees are to share rental vehicles in lieu of renting separate vehicles.
5. *Compensation/Pay During Travel*
 - a. Hours worked will be paid at the regular rate of pay. Neither sleeping nor meal times will be compensated as work time.
 - b. Employees subject to overtime provisions of the FLSA (non-exempt employees) who travel overnight on business (more than one day) will be paid for time spent traveling, except for meal periods and normal working hours on non-working days (such as Saturdays or holidays).
 - c. Travel time spent as a passenger on an airplane, train, bus, or car outside of regular working hours is not considered work time.

6. Falsification of expense reimbursement is a violation of County policy and subjects an employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

F. Per Diem Payment

1. Per Diem rates are based on current General Services Administration (GSA) rates, and are calculated based on the location/are to which the employee is traveling. Current rates can be found at www.gsa.gov/travel-resources.
- a. Employees must be in travel status, away from Lamb County, for the following length of time to qualify for per diem pay for meals:

At least four (4) hours	One meal
At least nine (9) hours	Two meals
At least twelve (12) hours	Three meals

- b. County-issued credit cards are not authorized for meal purchases, except by law enforcement officers who are conducting prisoner transportation.

5.07 LONGEVITY PAY

Assistant prosecutors shall be provided longevity pay in accordance with State law.

5.08 APPROVING AUTHORITY

The Commissioners Court is the approving authority for all payrolls and for any pay increases, decreases, or payroll transfers granted under the terms of these policies and the annual budget.

BENEFITS

6.01 MEDICAL AND LIFE INSURANCE

- A. All regular employees are eligible for group medical and life insurance. The amount of County contribution towards premiums will be determined annually. If the employee elects for group medical, life, and dental insurance coverage, the premium due will be paid through payroll deduction. An eligible employee may elect dependent coverage at their own expense; such dependent coverage premium expense will be paid by the employee through payroll deduction. All premiums are paid one month in advance of the effective date of coverage. Lamb County does not provide retiree medical or life insurance.
- B. Upon employment, each eligible employee (as defined in the plan for insurance coverage) is given detailed information regarding the County's insurance programs. Employees have a ninety (90)-day eligibility waiting period before medical or life insurance coverage becomes effective.
- C. Employees who have a change in family status (e.g., marriage, divorce, birth, adoption, or death) or loss of other coverage may apply for County insurance coverage within thirty (30) days of the date of the change or loss of coverage. Applications received after the thirty (30)-day eligibility period will be considered late, and must wait for the next annual enrollment period to apply for or change coverage.
- D. Grandfathered employees who have current alternative group coverage and elect to remain on alternate group coverage will be reimbursed the cost of their alternative coverage premiums up to the amount which would otherwise be paid by Lamb County, were the employee covered on the Lamb County plan(s). Employees who remain on alternative group coverage must provide proof of coverage and associated premium costs each year during Lamb County's annual enrollment period in order to receive reimbursement. New employees are not eligible for reimbursement for the cost of alternate group coverage. New employees who elect to pay for alternate group coverage must sign a Waiver of County Coverage, and will not be compensated for the cost of alternate coverage.
- E. Employees on leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or other unpaid leave are responsible for making premium payments for supplemental and dependent coverage in a timely manner (see Section 7.08 for more details). Failure to make these payments in a timely manner will result in termination of coverage.

6.02 RETIREMENT PLANS

- A. Lamb County offers a retirement benefit plan through the Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS). Additionally, the County participates in Social Security and Medicare contribution, and offers a deferred compensation plan.
- B. All regular employees will participate in the TCDRS.

1. Contributions are made through payroll deduction, at a rate of seven (7) percent of the employee's gross salary. Contributions are deducted before income taxes are withheld, as specified under Section 414 of the Internal Revenue Code.
 2. The County makes a similar contribution to each account. All contributions earn interest each year.
 3. All contributions made by the employee or the County to the TCDRS are subject to the rules and regulations adopted by the TCDRS. Additional and more specific information regarding the TCDRS is available in its Information Handbook.
- C. Lamb County retirees who are rehired by the County after lapse of the mandatory two-month separation period are required to establish a new membership with the TCDRS.
- D. Most employees of the County are eligible for Social Security coverage; exceptions exist for State employees on County supplement, temporary employees, and most election workers. Coverage includes benefits for retirement, disability insurance, and survivors, as provided by Federal law. Contributions to the Social Security/Medicare system are shared equally by the County and the employee.
- E. Lamb County allows employees to participate in a deferred compensation plan through payroll deduction. The plan is administered according to provisions of applicable Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations.
1. The purpose of the deferred compensation plan is to allow employees to set aside a portion of their salary, and receive its value at retirement. The amount of deferred earnings (plus investment earnings) is not considered income for federal tax purposes until its value is paid as provided in the plan.
 2. Participation in the deferred compensation plan is voluntary and is available to regular employees. Withdrawals without penalty are permitted only upon termination of County employment or in an extreme emergency. Early withdrawals are subject to penalty by the deferred compensation provider as well as the IRS.
 3. Employees may obtain information booklets regarding the deferred compensation plan from the County Treasurer and the deferred compensation provider. A plan prospectus is available from the provider, as well.

6.03 WORKERS COMPENSATION

Most County employees are covered by the Workers Compensation Insurance Program, and Lamb County pays the premium for this coverage. Detailed information about workers compensation benefits can be found in Section 8.00.

6.04 UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Most County employees are covered under the Texas Unemployment Compensation Insurance Program. This program provides payments for unemployed workers in certain circumstances.

Lamb County contests all unemployment claims.

6.05 SECTION 125/CAFETERIA PLAN AND FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNTS

A. Section 125 Plans

1. The 125 plan is a flexible benefit plan provided to all regular employees. It is designed to give employees more value for their benefits. Under 125 plans, the cost of certain optional insurance premiums are deducted from the employee's gross pay before taxes. This lowers the employee's taxable income.
2. Employees may only enroll in the 125 plans upon initially being hired, during the annual election period, or after a change of family status. Once the election period has ended, employees must wait until the next enrollment period to participate in the 125 plan.
3. All new employees have thirty-one (31) days from the date of hire to enroll in the 125 plan. No changes or cancellations in the 125 plan elections are permitted until the next election period, unless the employee has a change in family status. A change in family status includes any of the following: marriage, divorce, birth or adoption of a child, a change in dependent custody, death of a spouse or child, termination of spouse's employment, or gainful employment of a spouse. Employees who experience a change in family status have thirty (30) days from the date the change occurred to modify 125 elections, apply for coverage, or drop coverage. Additions to coverage require payment one month in advance of the effective date.

B. Flexible Spending Accounts

1. The Flexible Spending Account (FSA) is a voluntary program which enables an employee hired no later than October 1 of a given calendar year to participate in the annual enrollment, and receive tax deferred payment of uninsured medical costs and dependent care.
2. Annual IRS regulations provide limitations on the allowable dollar amount contributions to an employee's FSA.

6.06 CONTINUATION OF GROUP INSURANCE

The federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA) provides individuals with the option to continue group health insurance coverage for both the employee and covered dependents under specified conditions and at the individual's full expense when insurance would otherwise terminate (separation, divorce, death, over-age, etc.). The County Treasurer has information regarding the continuation of these benefits under COBRA, and how to access them.

6.07 COMMUNICATION OF BENEFITS

- A. The County Treasurer is responsible for informing new employees of available benefits through the orientation program, and by providing plan description booklets. County employees are encouraged to become familiar with all aspects of their benefits.
- B. Each Department's Supervisory personnel should become familiar with fundamental aspects of the benefits programs offered by Lamb County, in order to answer routine questions regarding the programs. The County Treasurer is available to answer more technical questions.
- C. Changes or modifications to benefit programs will be communicated to supervisory/management personnel by the County Treasurer. Elected Officials and Supervisors are responsible for communicating these changes to their employees.

LEAVE TIME

7.01 LEAVE TIME

A. General Policy

1. Leave time is the time during normal working hours in which an employee does not engage in the performance of job duties. Leave time may either be paid or unpaid, and it must be approved or designated by the Elected Official. Employees may be required to secure authorization in before taking leave time, using the County's Leave/Flex Request Form.
2. No advance of unearned leave will be given for any reason.
3. Leave time taken should be reflected on the bi-weekly time sheets used by non-exempt employees.
4. If leave requested is longer than two weeks in duration, the employee must contact their Elected Official weekly after the initial two week leave period has lapsed. Failure to do so could subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
5. Nothing in this policy is intended to conflict with the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). If there is a conflict, the provisions of the FMLA prevail. (For more information on FMLA leave, see Section 7.11 below.)

7.02 PAID PERSONAL LEAVE

A. General Policy

1. Regular employees accrue paid personal leave when working or on paid leave. Accrual occurs at the end of each two week pay period, and employees must have worked or be on paid leave during at least one-half of the pay period in order to earn the paid personal leave. No accruals occur during periods of unpaid, unauthorized, or military leave.
2. Employees are encouraged to take time away from the office at least annually.
3. Regular full-time employees earn six and one quarter (6.25) hours of paid personal leave during each bi-weekly pay period. Regular full-time employees with eight (8) or more years of regular service to Lamb County earn eight (8) hours each bi-weekly pay period.
4. Regular (permanent) part-time employees earn three (3) hours of paid personal leave during each bi-weekly pay period.
5. Elected and Appointed Officials, temporary part-time, and seasonal employees earn no paid personal leave hours.
6. All rehired regular employees, including retirees, accrue paid personal leave as a new employee with no prior service.

7. Employees are eligible to use accrued personal leave after two weeks of continuous service. Elected Officials may require employees to use personal leave when their presence in the workplace is deemed detrimental to themselves or others.
8. Regular (permanent) part-time employees who do not normally work twenty-nine (29) hours in a work week are not required to use their personal leave to fulfill a typical “part time” work week of 29 hours. For example, a regular (permanent) part-time employee typically working twenty (20) hours per week would only be required to use personal leave sufficient to fulfill a 20-hour work week if they took personal leave.
9. Any employee requesting leave who has accrued compensatory time and paid personal leave will have leave time deducted from compensatory time accrued first, before leave is deducted from paid personal leave.
10. Unused paid personal leave may be carried over into the next fiscal year up to the maximum hours allowed. Elected Officials may require employees to take leave during the fiscal year to prevent accumulations greater than the maximum allowed carryover.
11. Regular (permanent) part-time employees have a maximum accrual of seventy-eight (78) hours of personal leave during each fiscal year.
12. In the event an excess accrual results at the end of the fiscal year, employees have two options for disposal of accumulated personal paid leave in excess of the maximum annual carryover:
 - a. Transfer excess hours to the family medical leave bank. The family medical leave bank may not exceed 240 hours, and has no cash value at any time. The family medical leave bank hours will be used prior to compensatory time hours, or paid personal leave, in cases that meet FMLA requirements (for more information see Section 7.11).
 - b. Eliminate Overage. Employees are required to eliminate their paid personal time leave overages in exchange for no cash payment or value.
13. Maximum allowable annual carryover is as follows:
 - a. Regular full-time employees with fewer than eight (8) years of service: no more than 144 hours annually; or
 - b. Regular full-time employees with eight (8) or more years of service: no more than 216 hours annually.
 - c. Regular (permanent) part-time employees: no more than fifty-eight (58) hours annually.

B. Sheriff's Office Leave Policy

1. County employees assigned to the Lamb County Sheriff's Office do not earn paid personal leave. Instead, Sheriff's Office employees are entitled to sick leave and vacation leave.
2. Regular full-time Sheriff's Office employees earn 3.08 hours of sick leave, and 3.08 hours of vacation leave, during each bi-weekly pay period. Regular full-time Sheriff's Office employees with eight (8) or more years of regular service earn 3.08 hours of sick leave and 4.62 hours of vacation leave during each bi-weekly pay period.
3. Maximum accrual of either sick or vacation leave for regular full-time Sheriff's Office employees is eighty (80) hours during any fiscal year. Regular full-time Sheriff's Office employees are allowed annual maximum accrual of 120 hours.
4. Sheriff's Office full-time employees have maximum allowable annual carryover of sick or vacation leave of no more than forty (40) hours of sick leave and forty (40) hours of vacation leave annually.
5. Sheriff's Office full-time employees who maintain more than forty (40) hours of carryover for sick or vacation leave will have the carryover disposed in the following manner:
 - a. Sick Leave: excess hours over the maximum allotted carryover (forty hours) must be transferred to the employee's bank of FMLA hours no later than the cutoff date for the end of the fiscal year. Any hours over the permitted forty (40) not transferred to the employee's FMLA bank will be lost.
 - b. Vacation leave: excess hours over the maximum allotted carryover (forty hours) will be lost if not used by the cutoff date for the end of the fiscal year.

C. Disposition of Leave and Compensatory Hours upon Separation

1. Employees who are terminated or otherwise separated from Employment with Lamb County must dispose of accrued additional pay or leave according to this policy.
2. Separated employees will be paid for all accumulated compensatory time earned at the hourly rate in place on the date of separation.
3. Elected Officials maintain discretion as to whether separated full-time employees are entitled to payment for accrued paid personal time upon separation.
4. Regular (permanent) part-time employees are not entitled to be paid out any accrued personal time at the time of separation, resignation, or termination.
5. Separated employees are NOT entitled to payment for unused leave time in cases of termination for cause, resignation in lieu of termination, or resignation under circumstances deemed unfavorable by the Elected Official.

6. Employees must satisfy all indebtedness to the County before any final pay is issued to them on separation. (See Section 3.14 for more information on this issue.)
7. Employees may not use accrued paid personal leave, holiday leave, sick leave, or vacation leave to extend their separation date.

D. Catastrophic Leave Pool Program

1. Lamb County has a Catastrophic Leave Pool Program for use by employees who experience severe injury, illness, or other extreme emergency.
2. Each employee who accumulates paid personal time has the ability to contribute up to forty hours per year to the Leave Pool, if the employee chooses to do so. Contribution to the Leave Pool is not required.
3. The Treasurer's Office has more information for employees who seek to participate in or benefit from this program.

7.03 HOLIDAY LEAVE

- A. Holidays are designated each year by the Commissioners Court and are days when County offices are closed for business.
 1. Regular full-time employees (both exempt and non-exempt), and non-essential law enforcement employees are eligible for all holiday leave.
 2. Regular essential law enforcement, temporary part time, and seasonal employees are not eligible for holiday leave.
 3. Regular (permanent) part time employees are eligible for up to four (4) hours of holiday pay, but cannot earn more than a total of twenty-nine (29) hours per holiday week. If earning four (4) hours of Holiday pay will put them over their 29 hours, the holiday pay will be reduced accordingly.
- B. Holiday leave may not be accrued, and is not paid upon separation. Holiday pay cannot be carried over to another fiscal or calendar year.
- C. Any employee who is absent without approved leave on the workday immediately preceding or following a holiday will not be paid for the holiday.
- D. If an official holiday falls within a regular employee's approved personal leave schedule, the employee will be granted the holiday during that same pay period, and will not be charged for that day of personal leave.
- E. Except for essential law enforcement employees, any regular full-time employee who works a holiday and cannot take off during the same pay period will be given thirty (30) days to take leave for the amount of time worked on the holiday.

7.04 UNAUTHORIZED LEAVE

When an employee is absent from regular duty without permission from the Elected Official or the Elected Official's designee, the employee will not be paid, will not accrue benefits or personal leave, and is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Any employee who does not report for work on one or more workdays without notifying their Elected Official or Supervisor is presumed to have abandoned their job, and may be removed from the payroll.

7.05 MILITARY LEAVE

- A. Lamb County employees who are members of the National Guard or Active Reserve components of the United States Armed Forces shall be allowed up to fifteen (15) days off per federal fiscal year with pay to attend authorized training sessions and exercises. The fifteen-day paid military leave is calculated according to the federal fiscal year, and any unused balance at the end of that time will not be carried forward into the next federal fiscal year. Pay for attendance at Reserve or National Guard training sessions or exercises will be authorized only for periods which fall within the employee's normal work schedule. An employee may use annual leave, earned compensatory time, or leave without pay if required to attend Reserve or National Guard training sessions or exercises in excess of the fifteen day maximum.
- B. Any employee going on military leave must provide their Supervisor with a set of orders within two (2) business days of receipt.
- C. Upon receipt of written request of an employee, Lamb County will provide a statement verifying the number of workdays used as well as the balance of workdays remaining for paid military leave in the fiscal year.
- D. Lamb County employees who leave their County positions as a result of being called to active military service, or who voluntarily enter the Armed Forces of the United States are eligible for reemployment in accordance with state and federal laws in effect at the time of their release from active duty.

7.06 JURY/CIVIC LEAVE

- A. Lamb County employees who are summonsed for jury duty shall receive regular pay for the period they are called for jury duty, which includes both the jury selection process and, if selected, the time actually served on the jury.
- B. Pay for serving on a jury shall only include the time the employee would have normally been scheduled to work, and does not include extra pay if jury service requires time outside the employee's normal work schedule.
- C. Employees are entitled to keep any fees paid for jury service.
- D. Any employee subpoenaed or ordered to attend Court to appear as a witness or to testify in some official capacity on behalf of the County is entitled to leave with pay for such period as the employee's Court attendance may require.

- E. If an employee is absent from work to appear in private (non-County) litigation in which the employee is a principal party, the leave taken will be personal, vacation, other eligible paid leave, or leave without pay.

7.07 FUNERAL/BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Every employee is entitled to up to three (3) days leave with pay for a death in the employee's immediate family. For purposes of this policy, "immediate family" includes the employee's spouse, and the child, foster child, parent, brother, or sister of the employee or the employee's spouse.

Employees may be allowed time off with pay, up to a maximum of four (4) hours, to attend the funeral of a friend or relative who is not a member of the employee's immediate family. If leave is needed beyond the limits set in this policy, it may be charged to available personal, vacation, or compensatory time, or leave without pay.

7.08 LEAVE WITHOUT PAY

- A. "Leave without pay" is an approved absence from duty, on a non-pay status, for a combined maximum of 240 hours per rolling year. Leave without pay may not be used to extend Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave. Leave without pay must be approved in advance by the employee's Elected Official. Nothing in this policy is intended to conflict with the provisions of the FMLA, as described in more detail in Section 7.11, below. If there is a conflict between the FMLA and this policy, provisions of the FMLA prevail.
- B. Leave without pay may be appropriate for the following reasons:
 - 1. Military service (see Section 7.05);
 - 2. Educational purposes (when successful completion will benefit the County and is job-related);
 - 3. Public service assignments;
 - 4. Personal or exchange programs which emphasize intergovernmental relations;
 - 5. Any other reason which, in the opinion of the Elected Official, merits leave without pay.
- C. Granting leave without pay is at the discretion of the Elected Official. Such leave is not authorized unless all applicable accrued paid leave has been exhausted, and there is a reasonable expectation the employee will return to work with the County at the end of the approved period. Request for and approval of the leave must be documented in writing, with a copy of the documentation placed in the employee's permanent personnel file (kept in the County Treasurer's Office).
- D. Employees on leave without pay receive no compensation and accrue no benefits, including personal leave, holidays, and retirement service credit. However, previously accrued seniority is retained during leave without pay, unless otherwise prohibited by the terms or provisions of the benefit programs affected.

- E. Medical insurance can be continued during leave without pay if the employee pays the premiums due (including the portion normally paid by the County) in full and in a timely manner to the County Treasurer's Office. Premiums are determined based on the actual hours of leave without pay. It is the employee's responsibility to make payment arrangements. Premiums not paid by the end of the month leave was taken will result in cancellation of coverage.
- F. Employees on leave without pay maintain an ongoing obligation to update their Elected Official if the circumstances which warranted or justified the initial request for leave have changed. Leave without pay may be revoked upon receipt of evidence that the cause for granting the leave was misrepresented or has ceased to exist.
- G. Unless otherwise arranged with the appropriate Elected Official, an employee on leave without pay must contact the Official at least once per week during leave to report the employee's status. Failure to provide required status reports, or to contact the office on the schedule required by the Elected Official is grounds for revoking the leave and will subject the employee on leave to disciplinary action.

7.09 INJURY LEAVE

For information regarding occupational disability or injury leave, see Section 8.

7.10 WEATHER CLOSINGS & EMERGENCIES

- A. As a general practice, Lamb County will not close for business during regular business hours unless the health, safety, or security of County employees could be seriously jeopardized. If such a situation arises, either because of severe weather conditions or other emergencies, the County Judge is responsible for initiating the closing of County business.
- B. The County Judge will notify the following entities of a closing for public announcement: local radio, Sheriff's Office Dispatch and Elected Officials. Announcements of emergency closing will, to the extent possible, specify the starting and ending times of the closing. Each Elected Official controls the working hours of their employees, even in an emergency situation.
- C. Many County Departments are continuously operating public safety and service Departments. As such, many County personnel will be required to work during emergency closings. Each Elected Official is responsible for designating their own employees and providing alternate information to employees designated as essential during emergency closings. Public safety will be the foremost concern in development of Departmental emergency action plans.

7.11 FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA)/MILITARY FAMILY LEAVE (MFL)

A. General Availability

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 requires employers to provide eligible employees with unpaid leave under certain circumstances. There are two types of leave available:

1. Basic, twelve (12)-week entitlement; and
2. Military Family Leave entitlement (described further in this policy).

B. Eligibility

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

1. Worked for Lamb County for at least twelve (12) months. (The twelve months of service do not have to be consecutive, but a continuous break in service of seven (7) years or more excludes service time from being included in the twelve-month period.); and
2. Worked at least 1,250 hours during the previous twelve months.

Employees with questions regarding eligibility for FMLA leave should contact the Treasurer's Office for more information.

C. Qualifying Events

Under the FMLA, an employee meeting the eligibility requirements set out above is eligible to take up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave during any twelve (12) month period^a for one of the following reasons:

1. To care for the employee's child during the first twelve (12) months following birth;
2. To care for a child during the first twelve (12) months following the child's placement with the employee for adoption or through foster care;
3. To care for a spouse, child (under the age of 18; or if over the age of 18, incapable of self-care due to disability), or parent with "serious health condition(s)";
4. The employee suffers a serious health condition rendering the employee unable to perform the essential functions of their job;
5. A "qualifying exigency" arises because the employee's spouse, child, or parent is a covered service member of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve, or National Guard), who has been deployed to a foreign country or has been notified of an impending call or order to Active Duty in a foreign country;
6. To care for a covered service member of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve, or National Guard) with a serious injury or illness, if the employee is the spouse, child, parent, or next of kin (nearest blood relative) to the service member; or

7. To care for a covered veteran undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious injury or illness, and who was a member of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve, or National Guard) at any time during the five years preceding the date on which the veteran began the medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy.

^a Exceptions apply on length of leave for employees of the County who are married and taking leave for certain reasons. More information can be found below in "Length of Leave."

D. "Serious Health Condition"

A "serious health condition" is defined as a health condition requiring overnight inpatient care at a hospital, hospice care, placement at a residential care medical facility, or continuing treatment by a licensed health care provider.

A "serious health condition" involving continuing treatment by a licensed healthcare provider" ("provider") includes any one or more of the following:

1. A period of incapacity of more than three (3) consecutive, full calendar days, and any subsequent treatment or period of incapacity relating to the same condition that also involves:
 - a. Treatment two (2) or more times within thirty (30) days of incapacity; or
 - b. Treatment by a provider on at least one occasion within the first seven (7) days of incapacity, that results in a regimen of continuing treatment by a provider.
2. Any period of incapacity due to pregnancy or prenatal care.
3. Any period of incapacity or treatment due to a chronic, serious health condition requiring periodic visits to a provider and continues over an extended period of time.
4. Any period of incapacity which is permanent or long-term, due to a condition for which treatment is not effective.
5. Any period of incapacity or absence to receive multiple treatments by a provider.

E. "Qualifying Exigency" Leave

Eligible employees may take FMLA/MFL exigency leave when an employee's spouse, child of any age, or parent is a covered service member of the Armed Forces who is on active duty or is called to active-duty status in a foreign country.

Leave may be taken by the employee to:

1. Address any issue arising out of the covered service member receiving seven (7) or less days' notice before active-duty deployment in support of a contingency operation. The eligible employee may take up to seven (7) days leave beginning on the date the covered service member receives the call or order to active duty.
2. Attend any official ceremony, program, or event sponsored by a branch of the Armed Forces and related to the active duty or call to active-duty status in a foreign country of a covered service member.
3. Attend family support/assistance program(s) and informational briefing(s) sponsored or promoted by the Armed Forces, Armed Forces service organizations, or the American Red Cross, related to active duty or call to active-duty status in a foreign country of a covered service member.
4. Arrange for alternative childcare, provide childcare on an urgent basis (not as routine), to attend school or daycare meetings, to enroll or transfer covered children under age nineteen (19), when necessitated by the active duty or call to active-duty status of a covered service member.
5. Make or update financial or legal arrangements to address the covered member's absence while on active duty or call to active-duty status in a foreign country.
6. Act as the covered service member's representative before a governmental agency to obtain, arrange, or appeal Armed Forces service benefits while the covered member is on active duty or call to active-duty status in a foreign county, for a period of ninety (90) days following the termination of the covered member's active-duty status.
7. Attend counseling provided by someone other than a health care provider for oneself, for the covered service member or covered child if the need for counseling arises from the active-duty status or call to active-duty status in a foreign country of a covered service member.
8. For a maximum of fifteen (15) days each occurrence, to spend time with a covered service member who is on a short-term, temporary, rest and recuperation leave during a period of deployment.
9. Attend post-deployment activities for the covered service member during a period of 90 days following the termination of the covered member's active-duty status.
10. Address issues that arise from the death of a covered service member while on active-duty status in a foreign country;
11. Conduct certain activities related to the care of the service member's parent, who is incapable of self-care, where those activities arise from the service member's covered active duty.

12. Address any other additional events that may arise out of the covered service member's active duty or call to active-duty status in a foreign country if the County agrees the leave qualifies as an exigency and to both the timing and duration of the leave.

F. Length of Leave

Lamb County sets the twelve (12) month period used under this policy as a "rolling" twelve (12) month period, measured backwards from the date the employee begins using FMLA/MFL leave.

1. FMLA

- a. Employees may use up to twelve (12) weeks of leave per twelve (12) month period.
- b. County employees who are married to each other are entitled to a maximum combined leave of twelve (12) weeks, in any twelve (12) month period for the birth or placement of a child, or care for a parent with a "serious health condition."

2. MFL

- a. County employees who are married to each other are entitled to a maximum combined leave of twenty-six (26) weeks in a single twelve (12) month period, if leave is to care for a covered service member or veteran with serious injury or illness.
 - b. Eligible employees are entitled to up to twenty-six (26) weeks of leave to care for a covered service member or covered veteran with a serious injury or illness during a single twelve (12) month period.
3. If an employee is entitled to twenty-six (26) weeks of leave under this policy to care for a covered service member or veteran, the employee forfeits unused leave if it is not completely exhausted during the twelve (12) month period.
 4. Leave entitlement under this section is determined on a per-injury basis. An eligible employee may be entitled to take more than one twelve (12) month period of twenty-six (26) weeks of leave if the leave is to care for different covered service members or veterans, or to care for the same covered service member or veteran with a subsequent serious illness or injury. Employees may not take more than twenty-six (26) weeks of MFL leave in any single twelve (12) month period.

G. Work-Related Injury

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

H. Paid and Unpaid Leave

If an employee has accrued paid leave, the employee is required to use accrued paid leave in the following order: (1) Compensatory time, (2) FMLA/MFL leave, (3) Personal/sick leave; and (4) Vacation leave. Any remainder of the leave period will be unpaid leave.

I. Continued Employee Benefits

1. During an employee's period of leave under this policy, the County will continue to pay the employee's medical plan premium at the same rate as if the employee were actively at work.
2. The employee is required to pay for dependent coverage and for any other coverage for which the employee would normally pay, or the coverage will be discontinued.
3. An employee's obligation to pay for coverage will be made through regular payroll deduction while the employee is on paid leave status. While on unpaid leave, the employee is required to pay for premiums due no later than the first day of the month in which the premium comes due. The County may cancel unpaid coverage by providing the employee advanced written notice, not less than fifteen (15) days before the coverage will be cancelled for non-payment.
4. At the end of the twelve (12) week leave period (FMLA) or twenty-six (26) week leave period (MFL), the employee will be offered coverage under the Combined Omnibus Budget Reform Act (COBRA) if the employee is unable to return to work.
5. While on leave without pay under this policy, employees do not earn personal, vacation, or sick leave; are not eligible for holiday pay; and do not earn other benefits afforded to employees actively at work except as stated in this policy and unless other employees who go on leave without pay are allowed to accrue those benefits as well.
6. An employee who is out on approved FMLA leave may not take trips outside of the county unless the travel is related to the employee's own "serious health condition," the "serious health condition" of the employee's child/spouse/parent, or to attend qualifying military events. Employees must request their immediate Supervisor's written permission to take trips outside of the county for other purposes, and Supervisors have sole discretion whether to allow them. Violation of this policy subjects employees to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

J. Intermittent Leave and Reduced Schedule

1. Employees may only take intermittent leave or work a reduced schedule under this policy if it is necessary for the care and treatment of a "serious health condition" of the employee, the employee's eligible family member, or a covered service member or veteran.
2. All work time missed as the result of intermittent leave or a reduced work schedule under this policy will be deducted from the employee's twelve (12) or twenty-six (26) week leave eligibility in a single twelve (12) month period.

K. Request for Leave

1. Unless FMLA leave is unforeseeable, employees are required to submit a written request for FMLA leave to their immediate Supervisor.
2. When reasonably practicable, employees should give immediate Supervisors at least thirty (30) days' notice before beginning leave under this policy.
3. When it is not reasonably practicable to give thirty (30) days' notice, the employee is required to give as much notice as possible.

L. Verification Requirements

1. The County has the right to require employees taking FMLA or MFL leave to provide written verification of the "serious health condition" of the employee or the employee's eligible family member when the employee requests or is using leave under these provisions.
2. The County may send a request for medical certification/verification to an employee who has been absent from work for three (3) or more days to determine the employee's eligibility for leave under FMLA. The employee should have their physician complete and return the medical certification/verification form no later than fifteen (15) days after the employee's receipt of the form to be eligible for FMLA leave.
3. An employee's failure to timely return the form may result in denial of FMLA leave. If the employee is unable to return the form within the fifteen (15) day deadline, they must provide a written explanation for the delay, providing good cause for the request for extension. This request for extension must be received by the County within the initial fifteen (15) day deadline.

Claim Made For	Forms Required	Who Completes Forms
Employee's own serious health condition	WH-380-E, Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Statement	Employee's treating provider
Employee family member's serious health condition	WH-380-F, Genetic Information Non-Disclosure Statement	Family member's treating provider
Qualifying Exigency	WH-384	Employee
Covered Service Member/Veteran's Serious Injury/Illness	WH-385	Service Member/Veteran's DoD treating provider
	Documents verifying family or next-of-kin relationship with covered service member/veteran	Employee
Intermittent Leave/Reduced Work Schedule	Documents certifying dates, duration of treatment, and statement of medical necessity for leave/reduced schedule	Employee/Employee's treating provider(s)

4. Employees requesting intermittent leave or a reduced work schedule may be required (upon request from the County) to re-certify the need for intermittent leave or reduced scheduling every six (6) months in connection with an eligible absence.
5. The County may ask for a second opinion from a health care provider of the County's choice, at the County's expense if the County has reason to question the certification provided, unless the leave is necessary to care for a covered service member of the Armed Forces who is seriously injured or ill, or if the employee is supported by an Invitational Travel Order (ITO) or Invitational Travel Authorization (ITA) to join an injured or ill service member at their bedside.
6. If a conflict exists between the certification/verification submitted by the employee and the second opinion obtained by the County, the County may require a third certification/verification at the expense of the County from a health care provider agreed upon by both the employee and the County. The third opinion is final and binding on the County and employee.

M. Reinstatement

1. Employees returning to work after taking FMLA leave due to the employee's own "serious health condition" must provide a fitness-for-duty certification before returning to work.
2. Employees returning from FMLA leave under this policy who have not exceeded the twelve (12) week maximum leave period allowed will be returned to the same job, or a job equivalent to the one the employee held before going on FMLA leave. Employees returning from MFL leave under this policy who have not exceeded the twenty-six (26) week maximum leave period in a single twelve (12) month period will be returned to the same job or a job equivalent to the one the employee held before going on MFL leave.
3. If an employee is placed in a different position upon the employee's return to work, it will be one with equivalent status, pay, benefits, and other employment terms, which involves substantially equivalent skill, effort, responsibility, and authority from the employee.
4. The County maintains no obligation to reinstate an employee who takes more than the twelve (12) weeks of leave allowed under this policy, or who elects not to return to work after using the maximum leave allowed, including an employee who has available sick or vacation leave.

N. Repayment of Benefits

1. Employees who do not return to work after using the maximum leave allowed under this policy will be required to reimburse the County for all medical premiums and other benefits paid by the County while the employee was on FMLA leave.

2. The only exceptions which will be considered to this requirement are if the employee or the employee's eligible family member's "serious health condition" does not allow for timely return, or if another situation prevents return (beyond the control of employee).

O. Enforcement

1. Employees who have been unlawfully discriminated in violation of the FMLA may bring a private law suit against an employer, or file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor.
2. The FMLA does not affect any federal or state law prohibiting discrimination; neither does it supersede any federal or state law providing greater family or medical leave rights.

7.12 LEAVE OF ABSENCE – OTHER

- A. Employees may request a personal leave of absence of a maximum of ten (10) days. Personal leaves of absence may be taken for reasons such as: extended vacation, continuing education, extended bereavement, or other personal matters.
- B. Personal leaves of absence are granted solely at the discretion of the Elected Official. Statuses of employees on personal leaves of absence are converted to "inactive," and employees on this type of leave do not accrue any benefits.
- C. Employees on personal leaves of absence may continue coverage on the County's health plan, but the individual employee is required to pay the entire premium, which includes both the County's and the employee's portions. The premium must be paid on the first of each month. Failure to timely pay the premium will result in cancellation of coverage, and the employee will become eligible for COBRA.
- D. Return to work after a personal leave of absence is not guaranteed, and subjects the employee to modification of job and job duties according to current business conditions and available job openings.

7.13 PAID QUARANTINE LEAVE FOR PEACE OFFICERS AND DETENTION OFFICERS

- A. "Detention officer" means an individual appointed or employed by the County as a jailer or other individual responsible for the care and custody of individuals incarcerated in the County jail.
- B. "Health authority" has the meaning assigned by Section 121.021, Tex. Health & Safety Code. A health authority is a physician appointed under the provisions of Chapter 121 to administer state and local laws relating to public health within the appointing body's jurisdiction. A health authority must be a competent physician with a reputable professional standing who is legally qualified to practice medicine in the state, and they must be a resident of the state. They must take an official oath and file said oath with the Department of State Health Services. For counties with no established local health department or public health district, a physician may be appointed as the health authority, to administer state and local laws relating to public health in the County's jurisdiction.

- C. "Peace officer" means an individual described by Article 2.12, Tex. Code of Criminal Procedure, who is elected for or employed or appointed by the County.
- D. Lamb County shall provide paid quarantine leave for peace officers and detention officers employed by Lamb County and ordered by a supervisor or the health authority to quarantine or isolate due to a possible or known exposure to a communicable disease while on duty. This includes peace officers and detention officers as defined by this policy, who are employed by or appointed or elected to their position.
- E. Eligible employees who are on qualifying paid quarantine leave shall receive all employment benefits and compensation, including leave accrual, retirement, and health benefits for the duration of the leave; and, if applicable, they shall be reimbursed for reasonable costs related to the quarantine, including lodging, medical, and transportation. An employee on qualifying paid quarantine leave will not have their leave balances reduced.
- F. Off-duty exposures are not covered by this policy.

HEALTH & SAFETY

8.01 SAFETY POLICY

- A. Lamb County is committed to providing a safe workplace for its employees.
- B. Each County employee must adhere to the general safety standards established for all employees, and comply with all Departmental safety requirements. Safety procedures may differ at each County Department. Each Elected Official or Supervisor will provide employees with specific information pertaining to their positions.
- C. Failure to follow safety standards set by the County, Elected Officials, and Supervisors subjects employees to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

8.02 EMPLOYEE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- A. Employees must immediately report any conditions that, in the employee's judgment, threaten the health and safety of County employees, visitors, or vendors. Reports should be made to Elected Officials or Supervisors.
- B. Employees are encouraged to make suggestions to Supervisors for improvements or ideas with the potential to make the County a safer place to work.

8.03 MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEETS (MSDS)

Each Elected Official will maintain a file containing all MSDS for any chemical products used in the work setting. Annual staff training is the responsibility of each Elected Official.

8.04 HAZARD COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

- A. Lamb County will provide its employees with information regarding hazardous chemicals to which they may be exposed in their workspace.
- B. Pursuant to the Texas Hazard Communication Act ("THCA"), the County has adopted a Hazard Communication Program. The master copy of the written hazard communication program will be maintained in the County Treasurer's Office. Copies of the written program will be modified as needed for each separate workplace where hazardous chemicals are used or stored, and a copy maintained at each workplace. The written program will be available to all interested employees, and their representatives, upon request.

8.05 WORKER'S COMPENSATION

- A. All Lamb County employees are covered by worker's compensation coverage while on duty for the County. Workers' compensation coverage pays for medical expenses resulting from a covered injury or illness an employee incurs while carrying out the duties of the employee's job. Workers' compensation also pays Temporary Income Benefits (TIBs) for time lost from work in excess of seven (7) calendar days as the result of eligible work-related injury or illness; but Law Enforcement employees receive salary continuation.

- B. Employees may use paid leave for all workers compensation time off lasting fewer than eight (8) days.
- C. All employees placed on workers compensation leave fall under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Lamb County runs FMLA and workers compensation concurrently.
- D. Any employee who suffers a work-related illness or injury is required to notify their Supervisor within seventy-two (72) hours of its occurrence. Failure to promptly report work-related injuries or illnesses will affect the employee's eligibility for benefits, and may delay benefit payments.
- E. Supervisors to whom a work-related injury or illness is reported must report the same to the Treasurer within seventy-two (72) hours of receiving notification from their employee.
- F. An employee who has lost time because of a work-related illness or injury is required to provide a release from the employee's treating health provider before being allowed to return to work.
- G. An employee's workers compensation benefits may be adversely affected if the employee is injured while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or while the employee is engaging in horseplay.

8.06 SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT

Lamb County has established and maintains a working environment which promotes and enhances the good health and safety of its employees. Therefore, smoking/vaping is prohibited in all indoor and enclosed areas of the County-owned or occupied buildings and facilities. No smoking/vaping is permitted within twenty (20) feet of any public entrance or exit of County facilities. Smoking/vaping by an employee who is interacting with the public in an official capacity is expressly prohibited.

8.07 CELLULAR TELEPHONE SAFETY/HANDHELD DEVICE USE

- A. Lamb County deeply values the safety and well-being of all employees. Due to the increasing number of crashes resulting from the use of cell phones while driving, the County strongly discourages the use of cellular telephones while employees are operating *any* vehicle.
- B. Employees are prohibited from using handheld mobile electronic devices to read, write, or send text messages in vehicles while operating a motor vehicle under any of the following circumstances:
 - 1. When an employee is operating a vehicle owned, leased, or rented by the County;
 - 2. When the employee is operating a personal motor vehicle in connection with or while conducting County business; and

3. When the cellular telephone or mobile electronic device is County-owned or leased by the County, or when the County provides a stipend or other financial arrangement for the business use of a personal cell phone or mobile electronic device.
- C. Employees should always do their best to plan to place and receive telephone calls either prior to traveling or while on rest breaks. If phone calls must be made or received while the employee is operating a motor vehicle, the employee should make their best effort to use hands-free technology.
- D. Federal law prohibits any holder of a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) who is operating any vehicle over 10,000 pounds GVWR from texting, with penalties and fines up to and including the loss of the person's CDL.
- E. Failure to abide by this policy may result in an employee being subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

8.08 SECURITY

- A. The Lamb County Sheriff is responsible for the security of all Lamb County facilities.
- B. Employees or visitors who see or receive any suspicious package, bag, backpack, case, stroller, or container should immediately notify local law enforcement or other Lamb County Sheriff's Office staff. Employees who receive telephonic bomb threats should follow the ATF Bomb Threat Checklist (the checklist can be found at: homepages.se.edu/public-safety/files/2011/05/bomb_checklist.pdf), and immediately notify their Supervisor and Courthouse Security.
- C. Each County employee working in the County courthouse, and each Elected Official doing business at the County courthouse, will be issued an identification (ID) badge by the County Judge's Office. It is the responsibility of each recipient of an ID badge to:
 1. Wear the County-issued ID badge assigned to the employee while on duty for the County;
 2. Produce the ID badge and identify themselves as a County employee when asked by Elected Official(s), law enforcement, or other emergency services personnel; and
 3. Maintain and be responsible for the upkeep and location of the County-issued ID badge at all times.
- D. County employees are not permitted to utilize the County-issued ID badges for any purpose other than that authorized by their Elected Official or the County Judge. Each Elected Official has discretion to impose additional requirements or rules regarding use and wear of County-issued ID badges. Misuse or abuse of a County-issued ID badge could subject an employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Upon separation from County employment, any employee with a County-issued badge is required to return the badge to their Elected Official.

8.09 VIOLENT BEHAVIOR

- A. Lamb County will not tolerate violent behavior in the work environment. Employees who engage in or display violent behavior, who make threats to engage in violent behavior, or who encourage violent behavior in the work environment are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- B. Employees are required to report workplace violence to their Elected Official or Supervisor immediately.
- C. Immediately upon becoming aware of a disruptive employee or of a threat of violence to others or property, Elected Officials and Supervisors will take appropriate action (including notifying the Sheriff's Department).
- D. Any employee named as a "protected individual" in a Restraining or Protective Order shall immediately notify their Elected Official, Supervisor, and the County Sheriff. The protected employee will also provide a copy of the court order and a photograph of the individual they are protected from.

8.10 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLANS

- A. Each County Department is responsible for developing, updating, and educating employees about their emergency evacuation procedures. Department emergency evacuation plans shall be submitted annually with Departmental budget requests to the County Judge. The Sheriff is available for training on evacuation plans and procedures for all Departments if requested.
- B. Departmental evacuation plans should be posted in an area where all employees have access to view them.

8.11 BLOODBORNE PATHOGEN EXPOSURE CONTROL PLAN

- A. Lamb County has adopted a Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan, in compliance with the minimum standards required by Texas law.
- B. These statutory standards, and the County's plan for applying them, exist for the purpose of reducing or eliminating occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens and other potentially infectious material ("OPIM").
- C. Departments which either provide services in a facility providing health care-related services, or otherwise employ persons who have a risk of exposure to blood or OPIM in connection with exposure to sharps, will perform an exposure determination for employees who have occupational exposure to blood or OPIM.
- D. "Sharp" means an object used or encountered in a health care setting that can be reasonably anticipated to penetrate the skin or any other part of the body and to result in an exposure incident, including a needle device, a scalpel, a lancet, a piece of broken glass, a broken capillary tube, an exposed end of a dental wire, or a dental knife, drill, or bur.
- E. Exposure determinations will be made without regard to use of personal protective equipment, and will list all job classifications in which employees have occupational exposure, regardless of frequency.

- F. The “Lamb County Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan,” a more detailed explanation of the County’s policies and procedures for minimizing exposure of employees to bloodborne pathogens, is available at the County Treasurer’s Office upon request.

COUNTY PROPERTY

9.01 COUNTY PROPERTY

Each County employee is responsible for the care, maintenance, proper use, and upkeep of all County equipment issued to them. County employees will not use equipment, tools, and other County property for which no authorization to use has been given. Personal use of County equipment, tools, supplies, or property is prohibited and subjects employees to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Misuse of County property also subjects employees to criminal prosecution.

9.02 USE OF TOOLS, EQUIPMENT, PROPERTY, AND VEHICLES

- A. Employees who are assigned tools, laptops, electronic devices, equipment, vehicles, or any other County property by their Departments are responsible for the property and its proper use and maintenance. Assigned tools, equipment, vehicles, or other County property must be returned immediately when the employee is instructed to do so by their Elected Official or Supervisor.
- B. No personal or political use of any County property, credit card, electronic device, material, supply, tool, or equipment is permitted. Vehicles owned by or leased to the County are for County business only.
- C. Elected Officials may impose additional restrictions on the use and possession of County property, materials, supplies, tools, or equipment. If an employee is in doubt regarding permissible use, they should confirm with their Elected Official before proceeding.
- D. Lost, damaged, or stolen County property must be reported to the County Auditor's Office by the Elected Official in charge of the property, in writing, immediately after loss/damage is discovered.
- E. Property purchased with state or federal grant monies must only be utilized by the County Department staff by whom the grant funds were acquired, only for the intended purpose of the grant. Once grant funds are exhausted, the funded Department/project may continue to use equipment. When the equipment is no longer needed, it may be used in other activities previously supported by a state or federal agency. To dispose of the equipment, County Departments must adhere to the Uniform Grants Management Standards. Before replacing equipment purchased with grant monies, Departments must trade in the used equipment to offset the cost of replacement. Approval from the awarding agency, if required, must be obtained in writing prior to purchasing replacement equipment.

9.03 COUNTY VEHICLES

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

- B. If personal use of a County vehicle is permitted by an employee's Elected Official, the employee is required to keep a log of all personal miles driven (including to and from work). These personal miles logged will be subject to payroll taxes at the current Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rates in accordance with IRS rules and regulations.
- C. Any employee involved in an accident while operating County equipment or vehicles resulting in property damage and/or medical treatment for any party involved will be required to submit to testing for drugs or alcohol. If involved in an accident, the employee shall immediately report the accident to their Supervisor and to proper law enforcement authorities. (See more regarding accidents in County vehicles below in Sections 9.06 and 9.07.)

9.04 SEATBELT USE

- A. Lamb County employees who operate or ride in motor vehicles, including construction equipment, should be as protected as possible from the hazards of motor vehicle accidents.
- B. This policy applies to the following persons/situations:
 - 1. All County employees operating and riding in/on County-owned or leased motor vehicles;
 - 2. All visitors riding in/on County-owned vehicles;
 - 3. All employees operating personal vehicles while engaged in County business; and
 - 4. All employees riding as a passenger in a vehicle while on County business.
- C. All County-owned vehicles will be equipped with seatbelts. This includes the vehicle cab or operator's compartment, passenger seating area, and jump seats.
- D. Operators of tractors or other off-road vehicles equipped with Roll-Over Protection Structures (ROPS) will use seatbelts.
- E. Vehicle passengers will only be permitted to ride in areas of vehicles which are designed for that purpose.
- F. Seatbelts shall be used by all employees riding in a vehicle, while the vehicle is in motion.
- G. There are no vehicle exemptions to this policy.
- H. Employees who have a medical condition which may preclude wearing a seatbelt must carry a physician's note indicating a waiver/exemption for medical reasons.
- I. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

9.05 VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE

- A. All employees operating County vehicles, or employees operating personal vehicles on County business, are required to have a current eligible Texas Driver's License necessary for legal operation of the vehicle, and must inform their Supervisor of any change of status of their license.
- B. Employees required to have a valid Texas Driver's License are required to report all traffic violations involving a motor vehicle to their Supervisor.
- C. If at any time the Elected Official or Supervisor believes an employee does not meet minimum requirements for a required Driver's License, Lamb County has the right to have the employee evaluated for licensing requirements. Supervisors will periodically check the driving records of all employees who operate County vehicles or are required to drive personal vehicles on County business. (See Section 2.12 for more information regarding employee driving records.)
- D. An employee whose job involves operation of a vehicle or equipment requiring a license for its legal operation, but who is deemed uninsurable by the County's vehicle liability carrier shall be subject to possible job change, demotion, or termination (even if the employee's Driver's License status has not been revoked or suspended).
- E. Failure of an employee to maintain a safe driving record or required licensure may result in a demotion, reassignment, or termination.
- F. Suspension or revocation of the Driver's License of an employee who operates a County vehicle, or is required to drive a personal vehicle regularly on County business may result in demotion, reassignment, or termination.

9.06 VEHICLE INSURANCE

Lamb County maintains insurance coverage on all vehicles owned by or leased to the County. Employees who drive a personal vehicle on County business are required to have automobile liability insurance coverage as required by the State of Texas, and to maintain said insurance coverage.

Each employee to whom this provision applies will furnish to their Elected Official the proof of appropriate insurance coverage at least once per year, annually, and at such time(s) as coverage changes occur. Failure to meet any of these requirements may result in demotion, reassignment, or termination.

9.07 COUNTY VEHICLE ACCIDENT REPORTING (NON-LAW ENFORCEMENT EMPLOYEES)

- A. Any employee operating County vehicles must report any vehicular accidents, property damage resulting therefrom, and personal injury or liability claims regardless of the amount of claim or damage, to the employee's Elected Official and to appropriate law enforcement authorities immediately. Employees should ensure that if an accident occurs, an official accident report can be filed if necessary.

- B. In any case of a vehicular accident, the employee involved in the accident will prepare a written statement describing the incident and identifying any witnesses to it. The written statement will be submitted the next business day to the employee's Elected Official, appropriate law enforcement authorities, and to the County Judge. A copy of this statement will be provided to the County Treasurer for placement in the employee's permanent personnel file.
- C. The employee's Elected Official must notify the County Judge of the accident on the day of the accident if it occurred on a business day, or on the first business day following the accident if it occurred after hours or on a non-workday.
- D. No County employee, Elected Official is authorized to accept responsibility for any damages on behalf of Lamb County. Employees involved in accidents should exchange insurance coverage information with all parties and refer all claims and calls regarding claims to the County Judge.
- E. A copy of any accident report involving County equipment or vehicles must be forwarded to the Elected Official as soon as the law enforcement investigation is completed. A copy of the accident report must also be provided to the County Treasurer for placement in the involved employee's permanent personnel file.
- F. Any employee involved in an accident shall immediately contact their Elected Official and submit to a professionally administered test to determine the presence or absence of drugs and alcohol.

9.08 COUNTY VEHICLE ACCIDENT REPORTING (LAW ENFORCEMENT EMPLOYEES)

- A. Any law enforcement officer whose vehicle has been involved in an accident will immediately notify dispatch of the accident, the location, and the need for assistance or medical attention for any persons who may be injured.
- B. The Texas Department of Public Safety or the local Police Department having jurisdiction over the scene of the accident shall be immediately notified and asked to investigate the accident and make a report.
- C. All law enforcement employees involved in an accident will be required to immediately undergo professionally administered drug and alcohol testing.
- D. The officer's Supervisor will be promptly notified of the accident by the officer involved, unless the officer is unable to do so due to injury. In that case, the dispatcher will notify the appropriate supervisor. The officer(s) involved or their supervisor will submit a report within twenty-four (24) hours, documenting the accident, through the chain of command to the Sheriff or the Sheriff's designee.

9.09 COUNTY CREDIT CARDS

- A. Some employees may be issued a County credit card at the request of an Elected Official, and subject to approval by the County Auditor. The credit cards are for official County business use only, and personal use is strictly prohibited. Misuse of County credit cards will result in cancellation of the credit card and will subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Misuse of County credit cards also subjects the employee to criminal prosecution.
- B. Credit cards may be used for travel (to pay for airline tickets, registration fees, lodging, rental car, and fuel for the rental car);
- C. County Credit cards will not be used to purchase meals, except:
 - 1. Group meals purchased for County-sponsored training or meetings authorized by the Commissioners Court;
 - 2. To feed election workers on Election Day;
 - 3. To purchase meals when transporting prisoners; or
 - 4. Juror meals purchased outside normal business hours or during sequestration.
- D. County Credit cards will not be used to purchase fuel for personal vehicles.
- E. Each individual assigned a County credit card is personally responsible for their card. Any lost, stolen, or missing card must be reported immediately to the employee's Elected Official, and to the County Auditor.
- F. Elected Officials are responsible for monitoring and ensuring proper use of County credit cards.
- G. Detailed receipts must be provided to the employee's Elected Official each time a County credit card is used for a purchase. Failure to submit receipts may result in an employee being personally responsible for the purchase, and disciplinary action up to and including termination.

9.10 BUILDINGS AND PREMISES

- A. Use of County buildings, premises, and vehicles by employees shall be in compliance with state law and with County policies regarding authorized use.
- B. Because of the confidential nature of the work done by and records kept or generated in many County Departments, the County's policy is that video/audio recording in any manner (e.g., electronic, photographic, etc.) is expressly prohibited. Each Elected Official maintains discretion to designate certain areas of work space or job site as being limited access, and may prohibit video/audio recording as necessary to comply with all state and federal laws, regulations, guidelines, and rules requiring confidentiality and protection of confidential records and information.

9.11 COUNTY-ISSUED UNIFORMS

Some Departments may provide uniforms to their employees with the approval of Commissioners Court. Uniforms must be properly cared for by employees and will be returned when employment ceases. Upon separation, employees are responsible for the replacement costs of any uniforms issued that have become lost or irreparably damaged.

COMPUTER USAGE

10.01 COMPUTER & INTERNET USAGE

- A. Use of Lamb County information systems (including computers, facsimile machines, smart phones, tablet computers, and all devices used or forms of Internet/intranet access given) is provided for Lamb County business and authorized purposes only. Exceptions to this rule are provided in this policy and at the discretion of County Elected Officials.
- B. Brief and occasional personal use of the County's computers and internet service is acceptable, so long as it is not excessive or inappropriate, occurs during personal time (lunch or other breaks), and does not result in any expense to the County. Use is defined as "excessive" if it interferes with normal job functions, responsiveness, or the employee's ability to perform daily job duties. Electronic communication should not be used to solicit or sell products or services unrelated to the County's business; distract, intimidate, or harass coworkers or third parties; or in any way disrupt the workplace.
- C. Use of Lamb County computers, networks, and Internet access is a privilege granted by Elected Officials, and may be revoked at any time for inappropriate conduct carried out using such systems. Improper use will subject employees to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- D. Lamb County owns the rights to all data and files in any computer, network, or other information system used in the County. Lamb County also reserves the right to monitor all electronic mail messages (including personal, private, and instant messaging systems; use of social media websites, etc.) and their content, as well as any and all use of the Internet and of computer equipment used to create, view, or access electronic mail and Internet content.
- E. Employees should be aware that electronic mail messages sent and received using County equipment are not private, and are subject to viewing, downloading, inspection, release, and archiving by County Officials at all times. Lamb County has the right to inspect any and all files stored in private areas of the network or on individual computers or storage media in order to ensure compliance with policy and state and federal law.
- F. No employee may access another employee's computer files or electronic mail messages without prior authorization from either the employee or an appropriate County Official. No employee will be permitted to break any copyright laws, or to download any illegal or unauthorized files onto County equipment or networks. Lamb County monitors its entire informational system, and employees who violate this policy or in any way misuse County informational systems are subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- G. Employees should not bring personal computers to the workplace or connect them to Lamb County electronic systems unless expressly permitted to do so by their Supervisor and/or the IT Department. Violation of this policy will subject employees to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

10.02 COMPUTER SECURITY

- A. Each Department and each user of County computer and electronic systems must maintain a high level of physical security on each machine entrusted to the care of that Department and individual to prevent unauthorized access to the Lamb County network.
- B. When an employee has logged onto the network, the level of access to the network available to that employee is available to anyone using that computer. Thus, anyone sitting at the computer (e.g., visitors, reporters, contractors, janitors, jail inmates or trustees, or members of the public) will be able to view the same data, change the same data, and enter the same data the employee logged into the system is allowed to view, change, or enter. Not only does this potentially compromise the integrity of the data on the Lamb County network; in some cases it is illegal to disclose the information on the network without a court order or permission from a specific person.
- C. The following steps should be taken by all employees who use County computer equipment to ensure computer and network security:
 - 1. At the end of the shift or workday, users must log off their computer equipment.
 - 2. Users who are in the office but away from their workstation are to lock the workstation. Users who leave their office are to log off the workstation entirely.
 - 3. Users are not permitted to allow others to know or use their password for any reason, or to allow others to access the user's computer while logged on under the user's password. If any person requests a user's password for any reason whatsoever, the user is to immediately report it to their Elected Official. Allowing others to use a personally-assigned password is a serious breach of security and will be treated accordingly by the County.
 - 4. Non-employees are expressly forbidden to use any workstation or terminal (except public access terminals) without proper authorization.
 - 5. Users should not select commonplace passwords. Instead, users should select passwords with a combination of letters and numbers which the user can remember.
 - 6. Users should not write, type, or verbally communicate their password to anyone. In addition, users are to refrain from attaching the password to a terminal, keyboard, or any part of the computer, desk, or workstation. Passwords are not to be given to anyone over the telephone (including IT or tech support), and passwords should never be sent to any third party via electronic mail.

- D. Computer users are not to attempt to seek out, read, “hack” into other systems or other user’s login information, or breach computer or network security measures. Users will not intentionally seek access to or copies of information, files, or data which is confidential under federal, state, or local law. County users are not permitted to attach private equipment to the County network in any way, or use private services for the express purpose of circumventing this policy. Users are also prohibited from participating in the development, propagation, or forwarding of computer viruses.
- E. Only computers expressly permitted and configured by Lamb County are permitted to connect remotely to the County network. If a user has remote access to their workstation from home or if an outside agency has access, the communication software used must require manual entry of the password to gain network access.
- F. Many intellectual works are copyrighted. The owner of a copyright holds the exclusive right to reproduce and distribute the work. Most computer programs and manuals are copyrighted and care must be taken by County employees to comply with copyright laws.
- G. Many intellectual works are protected under trade secret laws. The content of some programs and manuals are considered trade secret by the owner. Civil and criminal penalties are associated with unauthorized disclosure of this information. Unless authorized in writing by the owner of the trade secret, users should not disclose any material containing trade secret declarations to anyone outside the County.
- H. Most computer software is licensed to a specific user or a group of specific users. License agreements are typically very specific as to the rights a user has to operate the program and make additional copies of the program. There are civil and criminal penalties associated with violation of a license agreement.

10.03 COMPUTER HARDWARE

- A. "Computer hardware" is defined as items including but not limited to: scanners, cameras, external hard drives, printers, keyboards, label printers, specialty computer mice, or other pointing devices, etc.
- B. Lamb County utilizes computer technology to enable its employees to maximize the quality and speed of services provided to the citizens of Lamb County. In order to make best use of limited resources, including equipment and personnel, only computer and network equipment specifically tested and approved by the County may be connected to the Lamb County network.

10.04 COMPUTER SOFTWARE

- A. Lamb County provides computers to its employees with pre-installed and approved software.
- B. The County encourages employees to use the provided technology to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in providing services to County citizens.

- C. Since Lamb County uses a fully integrated network system, any change to a single computer can affect the other users and workstations on the network. Because of this, and due to limited County resources, the following procedures are mandatory for all County employees:
1. All software on any computer attached to the Lamb County network or any other computer owned by Lamb County must be installed or uninstalled by Lamb County. (This includes games, desktop themes, and screen saver utilities not originally installed on the computer.)
 2. Lamb County must own or have proof of purchase of all software on all computers.
 3. All software must be configured and/or updated by Lamb County.

10.05 COUNTY-PROVIDED ELECTRONIC MAIL

- A. Electronic mail services are provided to Lamb County employees for the purpose of Lamb County business. Each employee and Elected Official have the individual responsibility to maintain and enhance the County's public image and to use County electronic mail ("e-mail") in a productive manner that accomplishes this goal.
- B. Lamb County acknowledges e-mail can be an efficient means of accomplishing other than in person communication, similar to the telephone.
- C. The County discourages personal use of the County e-mail system. Personal e-mail should not cause Lamb County to incur any direct cost in addition to the overall cost of providing e-mail. At the discretion of each Elected Official, the County's e-mail system may be used for incidental, or *de minimis* personal matters. Lamb County encourages the use of personal e-mail accounts for personal business.
- D. Employees using County e-mail accounts for personal matters must be aware that any and all communication on County provided e-mail accounts are subject to disclosure to the general public under the Texas Open Records Act, civil and criminal subpoenas, and other access authorized by law.
- E. To ensure responsible use of County-provided e-mail, the following guidelines have been established for its use. Misuse of County e-mail is prohibited.
1. Each user is responsible for the content of all text, audio, or images sent or communicated over the County's e-mail server. Except for law enforcement purposes, no e-mail or other electronic communication may be sent using the County's e-mail server that hides the identity of the sender, or represents the sender as someone else, or someone from another Department or County entity. All messages sent using the County's e-mail server should contain the user's name. Access to County e-mail is a privilege, not a right; a user's right to access County e-mail may be revoked for inappropriate conduct.

2. Elected Officials have authority to inspect the contents of any equipment, files, calendars, or electronic mail in the normal course of their managerial and supervisory responsibilities.
 3. If a request is made under the Texas Local Government Code and the Texas Public Information Act (Open Records Act), only the County Judge and Elected Officials are authorized to release Lamb County Records. Requests for public information must be made in writing. The release of Lamb County records involving network communications equipment is governed by the directives and laws set forth in the Texas Local Government Code and the Texas Public Information Act. If an employee is in doubt about the potential sensitivity of a document or communication, and whether it should be disclosed to the public, consultation with the County Attorney's Office is strongly recommended.
- F. Unacceptable use of County e-mail includes, but is not limited to knowingly transmitting, retrieving, or storing any communications or attachments which:
1. Discriminate against, defame, or are derogatory towards any individual or group;
 2. Promote or criticize a political campaign or party;
 3. Contain profane, vulgar language, pornographic material or which can be considered sexually harassing;
 4. Are "chain letters," imploring the recipient to forward the message to others;
 5. Contain derogatory or inflammatory language regarding any individual's race, age, disability, religion, national origin, physical attributes or sexual preference;
 6. Violate local, state, or federal law, or County policy;
 7. Copies, retrieves, or forwards copyrighted material without authorization; or
 8. Communicates any confidential material.
- G. Except as authorized above, use of Lamb County's e-mail must be for the benefit of the County, and must not be used for:
1. Personal monetary interest of gain;
 2. Purposes not directly related to the duties or responsibilities of the user before, during, or after business hours;
 3. Fundraising, public relations, or political activities;
 4. Communication involving personal sales or solicitation;
 5. Communication associated with any for-profit outside business activity;
 6. Communication which could subject Lamb County to be charged a fee by another person or entity; or

7. A manner reasonably likely to cause network congestion or significantly hamper the ability of others to access and use the services or equipment.

10.06 COUNTY INTERNET SERVICE

- A. Internet access is provided to Lamb County employees, contractors, vendors, and other persons or firms designated by authorized Lamb County Officials for the purpose of Lamb County business. Every employee and Elected Official has a responsibility to maintain and enhance the County's public image and to use County internet service in a productive, professional manner. Lamb County discourages personal use of the Internet.
- B. Improper use of the Internet is not acceptable, and will not be permitted. All employees are to use and access the Internet responsibly. Elected Officials have authority to inspect the contents of any equipment or files in the normal course of their managerial and supervisory responsibilities.
- C. In accordance with the Texas Local Government Code and the Texas Public Information Act (Open Records Act), only the County Judge and Elected Officials are authorized to release official Lamb County records.
- D. County employees may use the internet for professional development, to obtain continuing education or training, or to discuss issues related to the user's public duties or responsibilities. At the Elected Official's discretion, the County's internet service may be used for incidental or *de minimis* personal use.

10.07 LAMB COUNTY WEBSITE

- A. The website for Lamb County, and its associated pages, have been established by the Commissioners Court to improve the quality, productivity, and general cost-effectiveness of the County's workforce; it is also meant to greatly enhance communications between the public and the County. The layout and content of the site, and categories of information, are published at the direction of the Commissioners Court.
- B. All pages and sites will be professional in appearance, contain current and accurate information, and emphasize information important to the citizens of Lamb County.
- C. The Commissioners Court is the approving authority for all official Lamb County web pages, including design, layout, and content. Access to official County data (e.g., databases, images, documents, etc.) must be given through official Lamb County web pages.

10.08 VIOLATION OF COMPUTER POLICY

Violations of this policy will subject employees to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Employees who violate provisions in this policy can also subject themselves to additional civil and criminal penalties. Violations may also result in a user's workstation password and/or network access being revoked.

DISCIPLINARY GUIDELINES

11.01 DISCIPLINARY GUIDELINES

- A. Lamb County encourages the use and application of progressive disciplinary action whenever practical. Accordingly, lesser disciplinary actions may be taken when an employee first violates policy related to attendance or work performance, or engages in disruptive or inappropriate behavior. If the employee fails to correct the violation(s), or exhibits other behavior(s) in violation of policy, more intensive disciplinary action will be taken. Using progressive discipline in such a manner maximizes employee opportunities to correct issues.
- B. Utilizing progressive discipline, however, does not preclude or prohibit the County from exercising its right to impose more intense discipline. The County maintains the right to immediately terminate an employee whenever such action is deemed appropriate. While in most cases the disciplinary action(s) taken will depend upon the degree or severity of the infraction(s), the record of the employee, and the seriousness of the consequences of the violation(s), there are certain infractions which will result in severe disciplinary action regardless of the employee's disciplinary record.
- C. The purpose of utilizing standard disciplinary procedure is to make it easier to be consistent by applying similar penalties for similar infractions. Elected Officials and Supervisors maintain discretion to take circumstances into account when taking disciplinary action.

11.02 BASES FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION

All descriptions below are for illustrative purposes only, to provide examples to employees of what types of behaviors can be considered violative of County policy. These examples are not intended to be all-inclusive, or an exhaustive list. Violations of policy constituting grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination include but are not limited to the following:

A. Unsatisfactory Attendance

- 1. Excessive or unauthorized absences, tardiness, or a combination of the two.
- 2. Working overtime without prior permission and approval from the Elected Official.

B. Unsatisfactory Performance

- 1. Inability or unwillingness to satisfactorily perform assigned work.
- 2. Inability or unwillingness to perform duties at an acceptable level.
- 3. Failure to observe and follow the policies of the employee's Department or of the County.
- 4. Negligently causing damage to County property.

C. Indifference Towards Work

1. Inefficiency, negligence, indifference, loafing, or carelessness; failure to remain at work or leaving work without permission; performing personal business during working hours; abuse of eating or resting periods; sleeping or otherwise being inattentive during work hours; interfering with the work of others; or mistreatment of the public or other employees.
2. Failure to meet or maintain specified conditions of employment, such as failure to obtain or maintain a professional license or certificate required as a condition for performing a job.
3. Failure to respond to progressive disciplinary actions in a positive manner.

D. Insubordination

1. Willful failure to or refusal by an employee to perform assigned work or to completely comply with instructions or orders from a supervisor. (This behavior may include lying, the use of abusive language, and displaying open hostility in response to supervision.)
 - a. If an employee believes the instruction/order is improper, they should obey it and question the order later. This practice does not apply to imminently dangerous or illegal situations or acts.
 - b. If an employee believes an instruction/order, if followed, would result in personal injury or damage to County equipment, or is illegal, they should request approval by the next higher level of supervision before performing the work.

E. Causing Disturbance

1. Participating in any activity which hinders County business occurring on County property either during or outside of normal work hours.
2. Entering County property at unassigned times without permission of a Supervisor; fighting on County property; use of abusive, profane, or threatening language; horseplay; deliberately causing injury to fellow employees; harassment of other county employees or citizens; discourtesy to citizens; possession of explosives, dangerous weapons, or firearms without permission; creating dissension or discord between employees, between the County and employees, or between employees and citizens (this includes spreading rumors about the County or any of its employees).

F. Violation of Safety Rules

1. Improper removal of safety guards (e.g. fire extinguishers); failure to use safety equipment; failure to follow safety practice rules; failure to report an on-the-job injury, vehicle accident, or unsafe condition on the day of the occurrence; and smoking in prohibited areas.

2. Causing or contributing to an accident by operating County equipment in an unsafe or unauthorized manner.

G. Dishonesty

1. Stealing County property; stealing other employees' or citizens' property; misuse of County property or funds; cheating; lying; forging or willfully falsifying County reports, documents, etc.; misuse of paid leaves of absence; unauthorized charges against the County's accounts; falsifying origin of personal injury to collect workers compensation; falsifying a time card or timesheet; falsifying job qualifications; stealing or being apprehended with stolen property; illegally gambling on County property (on or off duty).
2. Taking County property, including but not limited to equipment, furniture, supplies, or construction materials for personal purposes without permission from an Elected Official.
3. Falsely reporting illness or injury, or otherwise attempting to deceive or mislead any official of the County as to a health or medical condition.
4. Failure to report any current or past criminal conviction which would prohibit the employee from working in any Department or location in Lamb County

H. Abuse of Drugs or Alcohol

1. On duty use, possession, or distribution of illegal drugs or alcohol.
2. Reporting to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
3. Dispensing, using, or possessing any illegal controlled substance during performance of job duties, on the job site, on County property, or in County vehicles.

I. Theft

1. Taking County equipment, materials, or vehicles for personal use without Elected Official authorization.
2. Improper use of County equipment, material, or vehicles (e.g., conducting personal business on County time, using County equipment for personal purposes, improper use of County equipment/services, and time spent on non-County business activities during the workday).
3. Willful waste of supplies, services, or equipment.

J. Sabotage

1. Deliberate damage or destruction of County property or equipment; advocacy of, or participation in, unlawful trespass or seizure of County property; encouraging or engaging in slowdowns, sit-ins, strikes, or any other concerted effort to limit or restrict County employees from working.
2. Removal of County property from its rightful premises without permission.

3. Falsifying, altering, or destroying County records.

K. Misconduct

1. Any conviction for, or confession to, a crime of moral turpitude, or lewd and immoral conduct, which occurred either during or after work hours, which could have an adverse effect on the County or the confidence of the public in the integrity of the County government.

L. Misuse of County Equipment or Services

1. Using County equipment, credentials, or services for anything other than County business.
2. Careless, negligent, or improper use of property or equipment.
3. Abuse, misuse, deliberate destruction, abandonment, or damage of property, tools, facilities, or equipment belonging to other employees, to citizens, or to the County.
4. Failure to deliver property found by, confiscated by, or relinquished to employees before the end of the work day.
5. Failure to report damage to County equipment or property of others.

M. Disqualification from Operating County Vehicles or Equipment

1. Failure to possess a valid Texas Driver's License in the classification required to operate County vehicles or equipment necessary to completing job duties.
2. Failure to maintain a driving record with less than three (3) moving violations within a three (3) year period, if the employee is required to operate a County vehicle or equipment as part of the employee's job duties.
3. Failure to report any traffic violation involving a motor vehicle to a Supervisor.

N. Job Abandonment

1. Being absent from work for one (1) or more working day or parts of one (1) working day without directly notifying the proper Supervisor and obtaining permission.
2. Failure to return from approved leave on the designated day and time.

O. Abuse of Authority

1. Utilizing County data or information systems for any reason other than to conduct County business.
2. Violating Departmental or County confidentiality requirements.
3. Misuse of County property or funds.

4. Using the official position an employee holds to coerce, oppress, or gain personally.
5. Supervisors or Elected Officials who use their position to pressure a subordinate into violating the law or County policy.

11.03 DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

Any of the following progressive disciplinary measures are recommended for use by supervisory staff. Supervisors are to evaluate each situation and apply an appropriate level of discipline. Some infractions may warrant skipping steps in the progressive process. Several forms related to disciplinary action are available for use in these situations, and may be obtained from the County Treasurer's Office.

A. Verbal Counseling

1. A supervisor advises the employee of the employee's unsatisfactory conduct or performance, and recommends specific area(s) for improvement.
2. Verbal counseling should be administered at or as close as reasonably possible to the time the misconduct or policy violation is observed, reported, and/or confirmed.

B. Written Reprimand

1. A written memorandum is made to the employee by the Supervisor for unsatisfactory performance, policy, procedural, or conduct violation(s); or in instances where a verbal counseling has already been given and the violation has occurred again, or where unsatisfactory performance has continued.
2. Supervisors are encouraged to have an independent witness present during the written reprimand of the employee.
3. A written reprimand should be administered at or as close as reasonably possible to the time the misconduct or policy violation is observed, reported, and/or confirmed. The employee is to be informed directly, in writing, of the violative conduct, the rule or policy it violates, the action being taken, the terms/conditions of that disciplinary action, the consequences of that action, and consequences of any future violations (should any occur).
4. Supervisors are to provide employees with a copy of the written reprimand given. This written documentation must also be provided to the County Treasurer for preservation in the employee's permanent personnel file.
5. The employee should sign where indicated on the written reprimand, indicating the employee received a copy of the document. The employee's signature on the document does not imply agreement with its contents.

6. If an employee refuses to sign a written reprimand form, the Supervisor is to write that the employee refused to sign, and provide the employee a copy of the document. If an independent witness is present and can attest to the employee's refusal, that person should sign the written reprimand form and indicate they witnessed the employee's refusal to sign.

C. Suspension

1. Suspension without pay, of no more than five (5) working days (or forty hours of work) will be administered in situations where at least one prior written reprimand has been given for previous infractions of policy or lack of sufficient performance, or in situations serious enough in the opinion of the Supervisor to warrant this level of discipline.
2. If suspension without pay is administered to an employee, the Supervisor or Elected Official must provide written documentation of imposition of this disciplinary action in the same manner prescribed by Section 11.03(B). This written documentation is to be provided to the County Treasurer for preservation in the employee's permanent personnel file.
3. An employee is not entitled to seniority, paid personal leave, holiday pay, or retirement service credit accrual during periods of unpaid leave or suspension without pay, but will not lose anything accrued prior to imposition of an unpaid suspension.
4. Employees suspended without pay are responsible for paying all insurance premiums, including that portion otherwise paid by the County while on suspension. Payment should be made in full by the end of the next pay period to the County Auditor. Failure to submit full payment by the end of the month in which the suspension occurs will result in cancellation of coverage.

D. Administrative Leave

1. An Elected Official may place an employee on administrative leave with or without pay. Circumstances warranting administrative leave includes, but is not limited to disposition of pending criminal or administrative investigations.
2. An employee is not entitled to seniority, paid personal leave, holiday pay, or retirement service credit accrual during periods of unpaid leave, but will not lose anything accrued prior to imposition of an unpaid suspension.
3. Employees on leave without pay status are responsible for paying all insurance premiums, including that portion otherwise paid by the County while on administrative leave. Payment should be made in full by the end of the next pay period to the County Auditor. Failure to submit full payment by the end of the month in which the administrative leave is taken will result in cancellation of coverage.

E. Separation

1. Separation may occur at any time during the employment relationship. It may be the first step if warranted by the situation.
2. The Notice of Separation Form should be submitted to the Treasurer's Office by the Elected Official as soon as possible to ensure timely payment of final wages and benefits.

SEPARATIONS

12.01 SEPARATIONS

Termination of employment (or separation) is any situation in which the employer-employee relationship between the County and a County employee ends. Because employment with Lamb County is based on mutual consent, both the employee and Lamb County have the right to terminate employment at will, with or without cause, at any time.

12.02 TYPES OF SEPARATION

All separations with Lamb County shall be designated as one of the following:

- A. Resignation
- B. Retirement
- C. Dismissal/Termination
- D. Reduction In Force
- E. Death
- F. Other

12.03 NOTICE OF RESIGNATION

Resigning employees are required to submit written notice of resignation to their Elected Official. Employees may resign at any time, with or without advance notice, due to their at will employment status. The Elected Official will submit a Payroll Change Notification form to the Treasurer's Office immediately after receiving notice an employee has resigned. The separation date is the last day worked by the employee.

12.04 RETIREMENT

- A. Regular full-time employees, regular part-time employees, and Elected/Appointed Officials are members of the Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS), which is a defined contribution plan. The TCDRS provides member services online at www.tcdrs.org, and via telephone at 1-800-823-7782.
- B. Service retirement eligibility for Lamb County is met by achieving thirty (30) years of service credit at any age, eight (8) years of service credit by age sixty (60), or combined years of age and service credit equaling seventy-five (75) or more (Rule of 75).
- C. Employees who plan to retire should notify their Elected Official of their intent at least thirty (30) days prior to the effective retirement date, in order to ensure timely coordination of benefits. Candidates for retirement should visit with the Treasurer's Office at least thirty (30) days prior to the effective retirement date, to complete all required paperwork.

- D. TCDRS recognizes service credits from prior employment with some other governmental entities. Contact the Treasurer's Office or TCDRS for additional information.
- E. Retirement is effective on the last day of the month in which the employee actually worked. Personal leave may not be used as actual work time in advance of retirement due to the Federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) insurance continuation date.
- F. Employees are eligible to apply for disability retirement if they have completed eight (8) years of service and are disabled. Disability applications require extensive medical documentation, and are evaluated by the TCDRS Medical Board.
- G. Lamb County retirees are not eligible for rehire by Lamb County until at least two (2) months have passed since their bona fide separation from Lamb County employment.

12.05 DISMISSAL

Lamb County is an at-will employer, and each Elected Official may dismiss an employee at any time for any reason or no reason, with or without notice.

12.06 REDUCTION IN FORCE

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

12.07 DEATH

A separation by death occurs when an individual dies while employed by the County. In such case, the employee's designated beneficiary will receive the remaining earned pay and payable benefits earned by the employee prior to the employee's death.

12.08 OTHER

Any separation not falling into one of the categories outlined above will be designated as an "other" separation. The Elected Official will provide details of the nature of the separation for the County Treasurer's personnel records.

12.09 NOTICE TO TREASURER

- A. As soon as an Elected Official becomes aware of separation from employment, or an intent to separate from employment, the employee's Supervisor or Elected Official should notify the County Treasurer's Office in writing using a Payroll Change Notification form. The separation date is the last day actually worked by the employee.
- B. Elected Officials should submit the Departmental personnel file of a separating employee to the Treasurer's Office immediately following separation. This Departmental file will be merged with the Treasurer's permanent personnel file for the employee.

12.10 BENEFITS AT SEPARATION

- A. Accrued benefits due and payable at separation will be paid. Unused leave will be paid out as described in Section 7; unused leave time will NOT be paid in cases of termination for cause, resignation in lieu of termination, or resignation under circumstances deemed unfavorable by the employee's Elected Official.
- B. Coverage under County benefits plans ends on the last day of the month in which the employee last worked. Prepaid insurance premiums will be refunded on the separating employee's final paycheck.
- C. COBRA gives employees and qualified covered family members the opportunity to continue health insurance coverage at their own expense. The separated employee should contact the Treasurer's Office for information on COBRA coverage.

12.11 FINAL PAY

- A. Employees will receive final pay as soon as administratively feasible, in accordance with applicable state law.
- B. Debts owed by the employee to the County (including the cost of any unreturned County property) are due and payable to Lamb County at separation. Lamb County will take all lawful steps (e.g., withholding a final paycheck, deducting the amount of debt owed to the County from the final paycheck, or deducting the cost of any unreturned County property) to recover monies owed to the County by separated employees.
- C. Employees indebted to Lamb County are not eligible for rehire until all indebtedness to the County has been cleared.

12.12 EXIT PROCESS

- A. Separating employees are to contact the County Treasurer's Office to schedule an exit interview. This interview affords an opportunity for discussion of employee benefits, right to COBRA coverage, and return of County property. Additionally, the interview gives separating employees the opportunity to express any concerns or suggestions. Employees who do not participate in the exit interview process will receive the information via U.S. mail at the last address on file with Lamb County.
- B. Employees are responsible for returning items issued to them by Lamb County, or which are in their possession or control. This includes, but is not limited to: County files or paperwork, employee lists, credit cards, long distance calling cards, keys, manuals, laptops, telephones, electronic devices, computers, modems, printers, facsimile machines, uniforms, identification badges, etc.
- C. Employees must return all County property immediately upon request, or upon termination of employment. As permitted by law, the County may withhold the cost of any items the employee does not return as required from the employee's final paycheck. The County will take all necessary action appropriate to recover or protect its property.

- D. The final paycheck may be held in the Treasurer's Office until an exit interview is held, unless circumstances make it impossible to schedule the interview and the employee makes other arrangements with the Treasurer's Office.

12.13 VERIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Elected Officials should refer all calls regarding employment verification and references on current or former employees to the County Treasurer's Office.

The Sheriff's Office may respond directly to such inquiries related to former County law enforcement personnel.

