

BOSQUE COUNTY EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Effective 01/01/2025

BOSQUE COUNTY EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have received a copy of the Bosque County Employee Handbook that outlines my benefits and obligations as a county employee. I understand that I am responsible for reading and familiarizing myself with the information in this manual and understand that it contains general personnel policies of the county. If I need clarification on any of the information in this manual, I will contact my immediate supervisor.

I further understand that the Bosque County Employee Handbook is not a contract of employment. I understand that I am an at-will employee and that my employment may be terminated by either myself or the county, at any time, with or without cause, and with or without notice.

I understand that this employee handbook is intended to provide guidance in understanding Bosque County's policies, practices and benefits. I understand that Bosque County retains the right to change this handbook at any time, and to modify or cancel any of its employee benefits when the need for change is recognized. It is my responsibility to comply with policies contained in this handbook and any revisions to it. I further agree that if I remain as an employee of the county following any modifications to the handbook, I accept and agree to such changes.

I understand as a county employee, I shall have no expectation of privacy when using county computers, networks, or other county owned equipment. Improper use may result in discipline up to and including termination.

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

I understand that I will be granted compensatory time off in lieu of payment of overtime to the extent provided by law and I may be required to take earned compensatory time off at the county's discretion.

I understand that I may be subject to reasonable suspicion or post-accident drug and alcohol testing. If I am required to have a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) for my county position, I will be subject to random, reasonable suspicion, post-accident and follow-up drug and alcohol testing.

I have read these policies and understand these policies and I agree to abide by and adhere to these policies.

Printed Name of Employee

Signature of Employee

Date Signed

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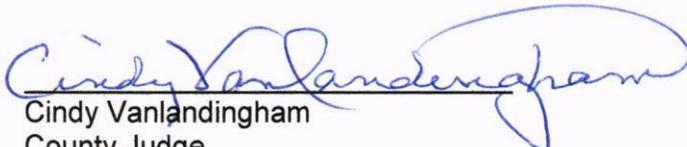
COUNTY OF BOSQUE
COMMISSIONERS COURT ORDER

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

WHEREAS the Bosque County Commissioners Court wishes to adequately communicate to employees the policies and procedures of the county:

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Bosque County Commissioners Court and hereby approve, and adopt, the BOSQUE COUNTY EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK.

ADOPTED THIS 6th DAY OF JANUARY, 2025


Cindy Vanlandingham
County Judge

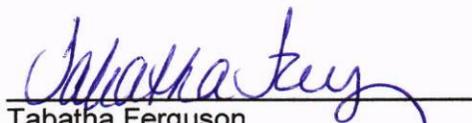

Billy Hall
Commissioner, Precinct 1

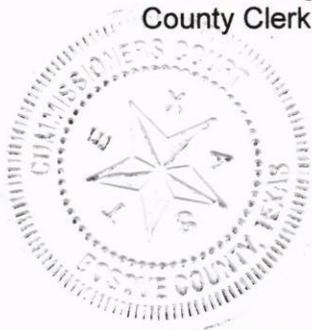

Terry Townley
Commissioner, Precinct 2


Larry Philipp
Commissioner, Precinct 3


Ronny Liardon
Commissioner, Precinct 4

Witnessed and Attested By:


Tabatha Ferguson
County Clerk



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RESOLUTION FOR BOSQUE COUNTY

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

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

Printed Name of Elected Official

Office of Elected Official

Signature of Elected Official

Date Signed

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Welcome to Bosque County!

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

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

This employee handbook contains some key policies, benefits, and expectations of Bosque County, and other information you will need. Each elected or appointed official may have detailed policy and procedures manuals for their office.

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

Welcome aboard!

Sincerely,

Cindy Vanlandingham
County Judge

Billy Hall
Commissioner, Precinct 1

Terry Townley
Commissioner, Precinct 2

Larry Philipp
Commissioner, Precinct 3

Ronny Liardon
Commissioner, Precinct 4

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ORGANIZATION

Legal Status

Bosque County's governmental organization is established by the Constitution of the State of Texas and by State Statutes. Its operations are governed by state and federal law and by actions of the Commissioners Court. Bosque County is an organization supported by Public Funds.

Local Governance

Commissioners Court consists of four County Commissioners, each elected by the voters of a Commissioner's precinct, and the County Judge, elected by all the voters of the County. The Commissioners Court is the primary policy-making body of the County. County operations are conducted through departments each, administered by an Elected Official or Appointed Department Head.

Authority

These policies are established by Commissioners Court of Bosque County and replace all previously approved policies. They are applicable in their entirety to all departments under the direct authority of Commissioners Court. Further, these policies are applicable to all County employees to the extent that the Commissioners Court has authority over subject matter of any particular policy including, but not limited to, issues of pay, leave, employee benefits, and fiscal matters. Certain of these personnel policies may be contingent upon available funds in each county department's budget and in the Bosque County general operating budget as well as any other funding sources.

Purpose

These policies set forth the primary rules governing employment with Bosque County. The policies contained herein inform employees of the benefits and obligations of employment with the County. They have been prepared and adopted in order to promote consistent, equitable, and effective practices which will result in high quality public service by both employees and supervisors. The policies within this manual do not constitute any type of employment agreement with Bosque County.

Responsibility for Implementation

Elected Officials and Department Heads are responsible for the administration of personnel policies within their elected office or department.

Applicability of Personnel Policies

The personnel policies apply equally to all employees and officials of the County unless a class of employees is specifically exempted. In cases where federal law or regulation supersedes local policy for specific groups of employees, such laws or regulations will substitute for these personnel policies only insofar as necessary to comply. Elected Officials and Department Heads must abide by these personnel policies in the administration of their departments.

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A. COUNTY EMPLOYMENT

A -1 EMPLOYMENT AT-WILL

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

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

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

Employees of Bosque County shall have the right to leave their employment with the county at any time, with or without notice.

A -2 CHANGES IN POLICIES

The information in this Employee Handbook is intended to provide an overview of the county human resource policies, but it is not intended as a complete and exhaustive listing of every policy and procedure.

Policies in this manual that are governed by applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations and will be interpreted in a way that is consistent with those laws and regulations. From time to time, changes may need to be made to policies. Bosque County has the right to modify anything in this manual at any time and for any reason. Compensation, hours of employment, work location, and all other terms and conditions of employment are subject to modification by the county.

Employees are to comply with policies contained in this handbook and any revisions or additions to these policies. Amendments or modifications of policies are effective immediately following Commissioners Court approval, unless policy itself states otherwise.

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B. EMPLOYEE PAYROLL

B – 1 EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS

In order to determine eligibility for benefits and overtime status and to ensure compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, Bosque County classifies its employees as shown below. Each county position has an employee status that identifies how the position is paid and how benefits are granted by Commissioners Court. The status of an employee cannot be changed without the approval of the Commissioners Court.

Exempt: An individual who is exempt from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) because they are classified as an executive, professional, administrative, outside sales employee, certain computer professionals, and meets the specific criteria for the exemption. Exempt employees are paid on a salaried basis, which means they receive the same salary from week to week regardless of how many hours they work. Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime compensation.

Nonexempt: An individual who is not exempt from the overtime provisions of the FLSA and is therefore entitled to overtime pay for all hours worked over 40 in a work week.

AGE REQUIREMENTS: Persons under 18 years of age should not be employed in any full time position. Temporary employees may not be less than 16 years of age. Other age limitations will be only as required by State or Federal Law applicable to the county.

Employees are also classified into one of the following employment categories:

REGULAR FULL TIME: A regular full time employee shall be any employee in a position which has a normal work schedule of at least 30 hours per week. Full time employees are eligible for participation in the county benefit programs for which they are qualified, as described in the descriptions of each of the individual benefits.

REGULAR PART TIME: A part time employee shall be any employee in a position which has a normal work schedule of less than 30 hours per week. Part time employees are only eligible for limited participation in certain county benefits as described in the descriptions of the individual benefits. For example, all regular part time employees must be placed on TCDRS retirement regardless of the number of hours worked per week.

TEMPORARY: A full or part time temporary employee shall be any employee who is hired into a position that is expected to last for a specific duration or until a specific project that is not on-going in nature is completed. Temporary employees are not eligible for participation in standard county benefit programs, except as mandated by applicable law. (i.e. Affordable Care Act).

TEMPORARY Seasonal: A seasonal employee shall be any employee who is hired into a position that lasts six (6) or less months and begins at approximately the same time each year. Examples may include election workers or summer mowers. Temporary seasonal employees are not eligible for participation in standard county benefit programs, except as mandated by applicable law. (i.e. Affordable Care Act).

B - 2 COMPENSATION

Bosque County Commissioners Court annually sets the maximum compensation for each employee in accordance with Texas State Law. Bosque County complies with the Fair Labor Standards Acts as outlined in the Fair Labor Standards Safe Harbor policy. All employees will be paid by Direct Deposit.

Law Enforcement personnel are treated in accordance with the 207(k) exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act. The Commissioners Court has adopted this exemption.

All non-exempt county employees will be paid an hourly wage. Temporary employees will be paid hourly at least the minimum wage established by the Fair Labor Standards Act, as amended.

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

B- 3 WORK WEEKS AND WORK PERIODS

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

B - 4 TIME SHEETS - ELECTRONIC TIME RECORDS

Non-exempt employees must complete an electronic time record. Supervisor approval is required. The payroll department must receive the approved electronic time record no later than 10:00 am on the Monday following the end of the pay period. Failure to complete an electronic time record and submit it to the payroll department may cause the employee to receive a paper paycheck or employee only receiving minimum wage payment until the proper time record has been submitted and approved. All corrections will be made on the next regularly scheduled payroll.

The electronic time records prepared by the employee shall show an accurate record of all time worked and leave taken for the pay period. The employee must submit the electronic time record for their supervisor's approval. If the supervisor determines changes need to be made, the supervisor will deny approval and the employee must make the corrections and re-submit. Electronic time records are governmental documents and as such require accurate and truthful information. Falsifying an electronic time record, a governmental record, is a criminal offense. Employees shall only use appropriate available leave to account for their regular weekly work schedule.

Exempt employees off for a full work day on administrative leave, vacation, or personal time off, will be required to account for that time on an electronic time record. Listing those days will clearly show when the time was taken.

B – 5 PAY PERIODS

The pay period for Bosque County shall be a fourteen day pay period with the pay period dates established by the Commissioners' Court. If a payday falls on a holiday or a weekend, paychecks shall be issued on the last workday immediately preceding the holiday or weekend.

The Texas Payday Law does not apply to political subdivisions of Texas (Counties); therefore, final wages will be issued on the regularly scheduled payday.

B – 6 WORK SCHEDULES

The normal hours of work for most positions in the county shall be from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday and 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Friday. Each department head will determine the exact working schedules for their employees. In order to meet the needs of the county, certain departments or employees may be required to work a schedule that varies from the normal work schedule, or they may be subject to call back in case of emergency or special need.

B – 7 HOURS WORKED

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

B – 8 OVERTIME CALCULATIONS AND RULES

Overtime shall include all time actually worked for the county in excess of 40 hours in any workweek, with the exception of law enforcement (See policy on "Law Enforcement Pay and Overtime")

Bosque County Employees should not earn or carry more than 40 hours of compensatory time without prior approval from the Commissioners Court. If an employee earns over 40 hours of compensatory time, the department head or elected official shall grant time off to that employee as soon as possible without causing an undue hardship on the department. If an emergency situation arises and compensatory time is earned over the 40 hours limit without prior consent of the Court, the department head will explain the situation at the next regular meeting of the Commissioner's Court.

Paid leave shall not be counted in determining if overtime has been worked in any workweek. Paid Leave includes Holiday, Vacation, Personal, Administrative Leave, Bereavement, Comp Time Taken, etc.

Except in emergencies, an employee will be required to have authorization from his/her supervisor before working overtime.

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.

The maximum amount of unused compensatory time an employee shall be allowed to have at any one time is 240 hours for regular employees and 480 hours for law enforcement. When an

employee has reached the maximum accrual of compensatory time allowed by FLSA, any additional overtime worked shall be compensated at a rate of one and one-half (1 ½) the employee's regular rate of pay until compensatory time has been used to bring the balance below the maximum.

Employees shall be allowed to use earned compensatory time within a reasonable period after it is requested provided that 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. Bosque County will have the right to require employees to use earned compensatory time at the convenience of the county.

If an employee terminates employment, for any reason, prior to using all earned FLSA compensatory time, they shall be paid for all unused compensatory time in accordance with the requirements of the FLSA.

Bosque County shall retain the right to "buy back" all or part of an employee's unused compensatory time by paying the employee for that time at the employee's current regular rate. Bosque County shall retain the right to pay all or part of the overtime worked in any workweek by paying for that overtime at one and one-half (1 ½) the employee's regular rate of pay.

Each employee will be responsible for recording any compensatory time used within a pay period on an electronic time record for that pay period. All earned compensatory time must be used prior to use of earned vacation time, personal leave time, and holidays.

B - 9 LAW ENFORCEMENT PAY AND OVERTIME

Bosque County Commissioners Court has resolved to adopt the FLSA Section 207(k) exemption under the Fair Labor Standards Act for law enforcement employees, which includes all law enforcement employees and jailers. The Bosque County Sheriff's Department will contain one work period each bi-weekly payroll. The work period will consist of 80 hours and begin on each Monday and end 14 consecutive calendar days later (336 hours). This establishes for Bosque County a 14 Day – 80 Hour work period. The salary covers 80 hours for the work period. Law enforcement employees must account for 80 hours during each work period. If an employee reports more than 80 actual hours worked during a work period, they will receive no additional salary compensation for the additional actual hours worked between 80 and 86 hours; however, the county will provide hour –for–hour straight comp time off benefit for actual hours worked up to 86 hours during a work period. Actual hours worked over 86 hours in the work period will be compensated at time and one-half (1 ½) compensatory time. Except in an emergency situation, as determined by the Commissioner's Court or the Sheriff, an employee must obtain advanced authorization from their supervisor before working overtime.

B -10 PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS

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

Employees eligible for membership in the Texas County and District Retirement System shall have their contributions to that system deducted from each paycheck. Any optional deduction authorized by the Commissioner's Court and approved by the employee will also be made from the employee's paycheck. No optional deduction will be made from an employee's paycheck unless the employee turns in written authorization for the deduction to the Human Resources Department.

If an employee becomes delinquent on their property taxes, the taxes will be deducted from the employee's paycheck pursuant to LGC Sec. 154.045. See Delinquent Bosque County Tax Payment Procedure. The employee will be notified before this occurs.

B -11 SOCIAL SECURITY / MEDICARE

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

B -12 IRS FRINGE BENEFITS

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

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C. EMPLOYEE CONDUCT AND PERFORMANCE

C – 1 BREAKS

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

C – 1A BREAKS FOR NURSING MOTHERS

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

Bosque County will provide reasonable paid or unpaid breaks for nursing mothers to express breast milk. The nursing mother will be allowed whatever time is needed to express breast milk, if the break is less than 15 minutes in duration, the break will be paid, however, if the break is longer than 15 minutes in duration, the break time will be unpaid time off.

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

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

C- 2 ATTENDANCE

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

Each employee shall report to work on each day they are scheduled to work and at the starting time set by their supervisor unless the supervisor gives prior approval for absence or the employee is unable to report for work because of circumstances beyond the control of the employee. If an employee is unable to be at work at their normal reporting time, they shall be responsible for notifying their supervisor at least 1 hour prior to the scheduled start of their shift or as soon as it is reasonably practicable in the case of an emergency. Calls to non-designated personnel, text messages, or messages left on voice mail will not be considered appropriate notification. Each supervisor must provide their employees with their personal cell phone or home phone number.

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

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

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

C - 3 DRESS CODE

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

C- 4 UNIFORM POLICY

Uniforms may be furnished to employees for reasons such as county departmental identification, security, and the nature of the tasks in those areas. Commissioner's Court retains the sole authority to sign contracts when needed for providing uniforms. County uniforms shall only be provided to those departments that have a Uniform Budget line approved by Commissioners Court and remain within the budgeted amount provided. All uniforms provided shall be in compliance with IRS Fringe Benefit rules.

Employees are expected to wear issued uniforms in a presentable and professional manner on the job. No alterations or additions to this attire (such as patches or insignias) may be made without prior approval. Uniforms should be similar to identify the individuals as county employees. Employees should wear uniforms only when on county business.

If normal wear and tear necessitate replacement of a uniform, the employee is responsible to notify the department head. No replacement will be made for gross negligence or malicious intent.

In cases where an employee has altered (other than tailoring to fit) or damaged an article or has been careless or negligent in the loss or destruction of the uniform, the cost of replacement uniforms may be charged to the employee, at the discretion of the department manager.

C - 5 TRAVEL AND EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

Overview

Section 152.011 of the Texas Local Government Code authorizes Bosque County Commissioners Court to set all travel expenses and other allowances for all official county travel. It is the policy of Bosque County to reimburse Employees/Elected Officials for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred during approved work-related travel. The purpose of meetings, courses or other travel should be specific to the job of the traveling employee or as required by statute to fulfill educational requirements of the office or required

certification. Employees seeking reimbursement should incur the lowest reasonable travel expenses and exercise care to avoid impropriety or the appearance of impropriety. Reimbursement is allowed only when reimbursement has not been, and will not be, received from other sources. Business travel policies are aligned with county reimbursement rules. All business-related travel paid with Bosque County funds must comply with county expenditure policies. Whenever unusual or unforeseen circumstances are involved or this published policy does not provide clear and sufficient guidance, the County Official or Department Head should seek a written opinion, when possible, from the County Auditor approving the circumstances prior to the travel.

Allowable Travel Expenses

Airfare

Employees/Elected Officials are expected to obtain the lowest available airfare that reasonably meets business travel needs. Airfare may be prepaid with a county purchasing card with a requisition being obtained prior to the purchase.

Employees/Elected Officials are encouraged to book flights at least 30 days in advance to avoid premium airfare pricing.

Coach class or economy tickets must be purchased.

If the airfare was purchased with a personal credit card, an original itemized airline receipt, an e-ticket receipt/statement or an Internet receipt/statement is required. The receipt must show the method of payment and indicate that payment was made.

Mileage Reimbursement/ Use of Personal Vehicle

Reimbursement for use of a personal automobile is based on the standard mileage rates as established by the Internal Revenue Service. The current IRS rate the day of travel will be applied. Employees/Elected Officials are required to hold a valid driver's license issued within the United States and personal automobile insurance in order to use a personal vehicle for travel for conference. Drivers should be aware of the extent of coverage (if any) provided by their automobile insurance for travel that is business or not personal in nature.

Employees/Elected Officials may not opt to request reimbursement for actual gasoline expenses in lieu of the Bosque County mileage rate. County credit cards, fuel cards, or fuel tanks should never be used to fuel a personal vehicle.

A detail trip agenda printed from Google Maps is required to be turned in with your reimbursement request which will show miles being claimed. The map should be from your normal place of work in the county to your destination.

Automobile Rental

Bosque County authorizes reimbursement for the most economic vehicle available. In certain circumstances larger vehicles may be rented, with supervisory approval. The rental agreement must clearly show the date and the points of departure/arrival, as well as the total cost. Drivers must adhere to the rental requirements, and restrictions must be followed. Original receipts are required.

When vehicle rentals are necessary, Bosque County encourages Employees/Elected Officials to purchase collision damage waiver (CDW) and loss damage waiver (LDW) coverage. Bosque County will reimburse the cost of CDW and LDW coverage; all other insurance reimbursements will be denied.

Drivers should be aware of the extent of coverage (if any) provided by his or her automobile insurance company for travel that is business and not personal in nature.

Parking fees, tolls and other incidental costs associated with the vehicle use are not covered by the rental agreement and should be turned in as separate reimbursable items if incurred. Employees/Elected Officials shall fill the gas tank before returning the vehicle to the rental agency to avoid service fees and more expensive fuel rates. County credit cards may be used to fill the gas tank on return of vehicle to the rental agency.

Reimbursement for a commercial rental vehicle as a primary mode of transportation is authorized only if the rental vehicle is more economical than any other type of public transportation, or if the destination is not otherwise accessible. Vehicle rental at a destination city is reimbursable. Original receipts are required.

Conference registration fees

When possible, registration fees should be paid for with a county purchasing card. If the conference fee was not prepaid, Bosque County will reimburse these fees, including business-related banquets or meals that are part of the conference registration. Original receipts to support the payment are required. If the conference does not provide a receipt, then a cancelled check, credit card slip/statement or documentation that the amount was paid is required for reimbursement. Registration fees should only be paid in the same budget year that the training occurs in. If Registration deadlines occur before the new budget has opened, ask for guidance from the auditor's office.

Registration fees paid directly by an individual will not be reimbursed until the conference is completed.

Hotel/Lodging

The cost of overnight lodging (room rate and tax only) will be reimbursed to the Employees/Elected Officials if the authorized travel is 60 miles or more from their home or primary worksite, or if the travel includes multiple days away from home. Bosque County will reimburse lodging expenses at reasonable standard room rates. When the hotel or motel is the conference or convention site, reimbursement will be limited to the conference rate. The County encourages the use of clean, comfortable and safe hotels but expects that the employee will be frugal in selecting a hotel. Government rates should be utilized whenever available. Lodging reimbursement will be based on the conference's start and dismissal times as well as the time of travel from Bosque County. Arrival one night before morning meetings is acceptable. Arrival the day of the meeting or conference is required whenever the meeting or conference does not begin before 12:00 p.m. Returning the same day that the conference or meeting ends is expected.

Business meals

Meals will be reimbursed at \$59 per day. This rate is based on the General Services Administration (GSA) standard rates.

Employees/Elected Officials are required to follow Bosque County expenditure policies when requesting reimbursement for business meals. Original itemized receipts are required. Non-itemized receipts will not be paid by the County and may require reimbursement to the county if county funds were expended via a county credit card (see credit card policy). Only actual expenditures are reimbursed for meals within the daily limit.

Tips are customary in our society and may be included on your meal bill, but they should not exceed 15% of the meal cost.

Meals for county business travel not requiring an overnight stay will be added to the employee's payroll if reimbursement is requested following IRS Tax Fringe Benefit Guide. The only exception to this rule is prisoner transport.

If the \$59 per day allowance is exceeded, the employee/elected official will be reimbursed the \$59 for that day, unless extenuating circumstances are approved by both the elected official and the county auditor.

The \$59 per day is not cumulative over the length of conference or training.

Meals will be reimbursed for County employee/Elected Officials only.

Business Expenses

Business expenses, including faxes, photocopies, Internet charges, data ports and business telephone calls incurred while on travel status, can be reimbursed.

Parking fees, including airport parking are allowable expenses. The lodging bill can be used as a receipt when charges are included as part of the overnight stay.

Tolls costs are allowable expenses.

Taxi, Uber, Lyft, bus and any other modes of transportation are allowable expenses.

Original itemized receipts are required for all business expenses.

Non-reimbursable Travel Expenses

The following items that may be associated with business travel shall not be reimbursed by Bosque County:

Alcoholic beverages, tobacco products & Hotel Room Snack Bars

Personal items, i.e. books, magazines, toiletries, medications

Laundry and dry cleaning

Personal entertainment expenses, health club facilities, movies, and social activities

Limousines or luxury rental cars

Refueling penalty charges by rental car companies

Commuting between home and the primary work location

Airport express check-in

Costs incurred for failure to cancel travel or hotel reservations in a timely fashion

Travel accident insurance premiums or purchase of additional travel insurance

Non-employee/Spouse's lodging, meals, or conference registration costs, or social outings

Spas or health clubs

Personal Phone calls

Dry Cleaning

Other expenses not directly related to the business travel.

Travel for Non-Employees-Additional costs for travel, lodging, meal or other travel expenses for spouses, family, or friends will not be reimbursed and shall not be charged to the county credit card

Out of State Travel

If any out of state travel is required, it is the responsibility of the County Official or Department Head, prior to reservations or departure, to make a request to the Commissioners Court and receive permission for such travel. County Officials travelling out of state for County business but not using County funds should have the Commissioners Court acknowledge the travel on the Commissioners Court Consent Agenda. The only exception to this rule is prisoner transport.

Required Documentation for reimbursement and credit card expenditures

Upon completion of travel, employee/elected official shall submit a Travel Claim Form within 10 days. The completed form must be signed by both the employee and the elected official of

the department. This form must be accompanied by Itemized receipt of conference registration, conference agenda, certificate of attendance (if provided by conference), Google Maps for mileage reimbursement, and itemized receipts for all expenditures.

It is the responsibility of the County Official or Department Head to see that all travel expense forms are properly completed and signed before being sent to the County Auditor's office. The County Official or Department Head shall be responsible to verify that adequate travel funds are available.

It is the responsibility of the County Official or Department Head to ensure that all reimbursement forms to the State of Texas, or any other reimbursing agency, are promptly submitted for reimbursement.

All requests are subject to the availability of adequate budgeted funds.

Remember, you are using taxpayer money when traveling. Use discretion and be good stewards of Bosque County tax dollars.

Monthly Expense Reimbursement

When the county credit card cannot be used for an employee expense, or when an employee uses their personal vehicle for county business, they may submit a request for reimbursement.

Requests for monthly expense reimbursements must be submitted to the auditor's office within 30 days after the completed month. Example: April Monthly expense report should be submitted by May 30th. These expenses must be submitted using the Monthly Report of Expenses Form along with required documentation (itemized receipts, google maps, etc.) signed by the employee requesting reimbursement and approved by the employee's department head/elected official.

Requests received more than 30 days after expense incurred will not be reimbursed.

For mileage reimbursement, a travel log must be maintained that indicates destination points, including address information, Google maps, purpose of travel, and any other information deemed necessary.

Commuting expenses incurred in traveling between the employee's residence and their main place of work (County Office) or for mileage expenses incurred in any other travel of a personal nature are not reimbursable. The IRS considers commuting miles and business miles as two separate types of mileage. Commuting miles are personal miles, which means that individuals drive from their home to their workplace and from their workplace to their home, which is not reimbursable by the county. The IRS considers commuting miles as daily travel expenses. The IRS considers business miles as extra business expenses and therefore reimbursable as determined by the county. If Mileage incurred in a single day to a place outside the office exceeds normal commuting mileage the additional mileage is reimbursable. Example: Employee's normal commute to and from work is 10 miles. Employee travels to another county office for a meeting, then home from that office, driving a total of 30 miles. Employee could submit 20 miles for mileage reimbursement.

C - 6 DISCIPLINE

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

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

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

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

C - 7 LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS

Bosque County has many positions that require licenses and certifications. It is the responsibility of each employee to maintain all required licenses and certifications. If an employee is unable to renew or loses a license or certification, they must immediately notify their supervisor. If this license is a requirement for the position, the employee may be demoted, transferred or terminated. Under no circumstances will the employee be allowed to continue in the position where a license or certification is required if failure to have such license or certification is illegal under either Federal or State Law.

C - 8 COUNTY PROPERTY USAGE

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

Office equipment is the property of the county. In the event you store any non-business information in the county’s files or electronic data, then you will have waived any right to privacy with respect to that stored information and it is subject to review by the county. Office telephones are for business use. Personal telephone calls are to be kept to a minimum so that all lines are available for business use. Personal long distance calls must not be charged to the county. The county mail facilities are for business usage. County postage shall not be used on personal mail.

Employees are not to remove any item from the county premises, other than personal belongings, without prior approval of supervisor and department head.

Changes to county offices or buildings shall not be made without commissioner’s court approval.

C - 9 COUNTY VEHICLE USAGE

Some employees may be required to use county vehicles as a part of their job. Employees who are assigned county vehicles shall be responsible for the care, maintenance, proper use and upkeep of these vehicles. Employees are expected to keep vehicles clean and free of debris and trash. Employees may only use the vehicles they are authorized to use.

Employees may not allow other individuals to operate the vehicles they have been assigned.

Employees may not use tobacco in county vehicles.

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

Employees who operate vehicles must maintain a current active license for the operation of that vehicle. If they have any change in status of their license they must immediately notify their supervisor. An employee whose job involves operation of a vehicle requiring a license for its legal operation will be subject to possible job change, demotion or termination if that license is suspended or revoked.

Employees driving a county owned vehicle will have their driving record checked through the Department of Public Safety at least one time per year. 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 even though the employee's license has not been revoked or suspended, will be subject to possible job change, demotion or termination.

Employees who drive county owned vehicles or who routinely drive their own vehicle on county business are expected to maintain their personal driving record free from moving traffic violations and DWI's. Any violations should be reported to employee's supervisor or department head. Payment of any traffic citations is the responsibility of the employee. Any driving record that establishes a pattern of unsafe driving practices that may endanger you or others, or impact your ability to perform your job duties, could subject you to disciplinary action and/or termination.

The primary responsibility of a driver is to operate a motor vehicle safely. The task of driving requires the driver's full attention and focus. Employees who are driving on county business are expected to follow all traffic regulations (including posted speed limits) and refrain from engaging in any activity that takes their eyes and attention off the road.

All county-owned vehicles will be equipped with seatbelts. This includes the vehicle cab or operator's compartment, passenger seating area and jump seats. Operators of tractors or other off-road vehicles equipped with Roll-Over Protection Structures (ROPS) will use seatbelts. Vehicle passengers will be permitted to ride only in areas of the vehicle designed for that purpose. Seatbelts shall be used by all employees riding in a vehicle while the vehicle is in motion.

Seat belts must be worn and secured at all times when vehicle is moving. The driver must be responsible for assuring that all passengers are seated and properly secured before moving the vehicle.

Any employee involved in an accident while operating county equipment or vehicles shall immediately report the accident to their supervisor and to the proper law enforcement and Human Resources Department immediately. A copy of all accident and incident reports prepared by the supervisor or employee will be sent to the Human Resources Department.

C - 10 CELL PHONE USAGE AND ALLOWANCE

Cell Phone Usage and Allowance

Bosque County determines on a case-by-case basis an employee's need for a cell phone for county business purposes. The elected official or department head is responsible for requesting the employee's participation in the cell phone allowance program. If approved, employees using their personal cell phones for business purposes while working for the county will be reimbursed a portion of a personal cell phone plan each month. The employee is responsible for any cost beyond what has been preapproved and for the timely payment of the monthly plan amount.

During working time, the employee is expected to exercise the same discretion in using personal cell phones as is expected for the use of county phones. Placing calls, receiving calls, or texting on your personal cell phones for non-business purposes should be kept to a minimum and should never interfere with your job performance or the job performance of other employees. Use of personal cell phones and other personal electronic equipment should only be used by employees during authorized breaks and meal periods unless it is county business. For safety reasons, cell phones and other electronic devices may not be used while working with tools and machinery and must not distract co-workers with tools and machinery.

Bosque County strongly discourages the use of any cell phone while operating any vehicle. Employees should plan calls to allow placement of calls either prior to traveling or while on rest breaks. As of September 1, 2017 Texas Law will prohibit a driver to read, write or send an electronic message while driving.

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

Cell Phone Allowance

As a method to relieve administrative burden and allow for greater freedom of personal use, the Commissioners Court may grant an allowance to any position or official/employee deemed appropriate. Generally, a cell phone allowance shall be granted as additional compensation for the official/employee.

1. The mobile telephone allowance will be monthly. It will be treated as ordinary income and subject to FICA, TCDRS, Federal Income Tax withholding, etc.
2. The Commissioners Court may adjust from time-to-time the allowance levels. The Court may remove or suspend any allowance previously authorized.
3. Bosque County will not be responsible for replacement of any mobile telephone equipment of a private individual if lost, damaged, destroyed, stolen or technologically outdated.
4. All individuals receiving a mobile telephone allowance from Bosque County are subject to making all documents (contracts, bills and receipts) available to the County Auditor or their department administration upon request. Documents in the possession of Bosque County may be subject to Open Records provisions.

5. No retroactive payments will be allowed. Allowances will start as of the date approved by Commissioners Court.
6. All cell phone allowances will cease immediately upon termination of the individual's employment or due to a break in mobile telephone service greater than one (1) week.
7. The Commissioners Court may reduce, expand or eliminate all or a portion of the cell phone allowance program. Bosque County is not obligated to any vendor or individual related to an individual contract agreement.
8. Officials/employees may not be assigned a county-owned cell phone and receive a cell phone allowance.
9. All employees receiving an allowance will be responsible for both their mobile telephone equipment and bill arising from its use. An employee is eligible for this allowance only if they provide the County their mobile telephone number and agree to accept and make County business calls through this service.

Public Information/Open Records Act.

1. Officials/employees are advised that records related to calls/ texts made on cell phones for county business purposes are public information. Information related to telephone numbers called, length of call and time and date of call ordinarily may be obtainable through the Open Records Act except in narrowly defined circumstances.
2. All Open Records Requests shall be referred to the County District Attorney's Office.

Sec. 552.004. Preservation of Information.

- (a). Creates this subsection from existing tex. Authorizes a governmental body or, for information of an elective county office, the elected county officer, to determine a time for which information that is not currently in use will be preserved, subject to Subsection (b) and to any applicable rule or law governing the destruction and other disposition of state and local government records or public information.
- (b). Requires a current or former officer or employee of a governmental body who maintains public information on a privately owned device to forward or transfer the public information to the governmental body or a governmental body server to be preserved as provided by Subsection (a) or to preserve the public information in its original form in a backup or archive and on the privately owned device for the time described under subsection (a).
- (c). Provides that the provisions of Chapter 441 (Libraries and Archives) of this code and Title 6 (Records), Local Government Code, governing the preservation, destruction, or other disposition of records or public information apply to records and public information held by a temporary custodian.

C -11 COMPUTER AND INTERNET USAGE

Electronic information systems include computers, fax machines, smart phones, tablet computers, and all forms of internet/intranet access. The Bosque County electronic information system is for county business and for authorized purposes only. Brief and occasional personal use of the electronic mail system or the internet is acceptable as 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 ability to perform daily job activities. Electronic communication should not be used to solicit or sell products or services that are unrelated to the county's business, nor should electronic

communication distract, intimidate or harass coworkers or third parties; or disrupt the workplace.

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

The following guidelines should be followed for all electronic communication, whether external or internal:

1. All electronic communications should be written in a professional manner.
2. County electronic communication systems shall not be used to access, create, view, transmit, or receive abusive, racist, sexist, profane, maliciously false language, pornography or other inappropriate or illegal content whether public or private. Such material violates the county equal employment/anti-harassment policies. The county's electronic mail system, internet access, and computer systems shall not be used to harm others or to violate the laws and regulations of federal, state or other local jurisdictions.
3. Employees are prohibited from maintaining, organizing, or participating in non-work-related web blogs, chat rooms, private/personal/instant messaging and recreational games on county systems and during work hours.
4. Employees shall not access networks, servers, drives, folders or files to which the employee has not been granted access or authorization. It is a violation of county policy for any employee, including administrators and supervisors to access electronic mail and computer systems to satisfy curiosity about the affairs of others, unless such access is directly related to that employee's job duties.

Bosque County owns the rights to all data and files in any computer, network, or other information system used in the county. Bosque County also reserves the right to monitor electronic mail messages (including personal/private/instant messaging systems, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and their content, as well as any and all use of the internet and of computer equipment used to create, view, or access e-mail and internet content. Employees must be aware that the electronic mail messages sent and received using county equipment are not private and are subject to viewing, downloading, inspection, release, and archiving by county officials at all times. Bosque 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 assure compliance with policy and state and federal laws. The county will comply with reasonable requests from law enforcement and regulatory agencies for logs, diaries, archives, or files on individual internet activities, e-mail use, and/or computer use.

No employee shall access another employee's computer, computer files, or electronic mail messages without prior authorization from either the employee or an appropriate county official. No employee shall break any copyright laws or download any illegal or unauthorized downloads. Bosque County monitors its entire informational systems and employees may be subject to discipline up to and including termination for any misuse of county informational systems.

Due to the significant risk of harm to the county's electronic resources, or loss of data from any unauthorized access, employees should not bring personal computers, data storage devices, "smart" phones or similar devices to the workplace and connect them to Bosque County electronic systems, unless expressly permitted to do so by their supervisor and the Information

Technology services. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

C -12 CREDIT CARD USAGE

The County will issue county credit cards to certain employees for use in their jobs. Credit cards are issued in the name of the county and the individual cardholder. The cardholder is the only person entitled to use the card issued in their name and is responsible for all charges made against the card. This policy sets out the acceptable and unacceptable uses of such credit cards.

Use of county-issued credit cards is a privilege, which the county may withdraw in the event of serious or repeated abuse. Any credit cards the county issues to an employee must be used for business purposes only, in conjunction with the employee's job duties. Spending limits that have been provided to each cardholder set the maximum dollar for each single purchase (Single Transaction Limit), daily number of transactions, and the total dollar amount for all purchases made with a credit card within a given billing cycle (30-day limit).

The employees with such credit cards should not use them for any non-business, non-essential purpose, i.e., for any personal purchase or any other transaction that is not authorized or needed to carry out their duties. Employees must pay for personal purchases (i.e., transactions for the benefit of anyone or anything other than the county) with their own funds or personal credit cards.

If any employee uses a county credit card for personal purchases or for any other type of unauthorized transaction in violation of this policy, i.e., incurs financial liability on the county's part that is not within the scope of the employee's duties or the employee's authorization to make business-related purchases, the cost of such purchase(s) or transaction(s) will be the financial responsibility of that employee. The cost of the unauthorized purchase will be considered an advance of future wages and the employee will be expected to reimburse the county via deductions from pay until the unauthorized amount is fully repaid. Such deductions will be the amount of the unauthorized purchase(s), but if a deduction for such amount would take the employee below minimum wage for the workweek in question, the deductions will be in two or more equal increments that will not take the employee's pay below minimum wage for any workweek involved.

The county will not regard expenses for business travel and related expenses, such as lodging and meals while on county approved business trips, as personal purchases, as long as such expenses are consistent with the county's travel and expense reimbursement policy. When the county credit card purchases travel related items, the original receipt must be attached to the purchase order/voucher. A copy of the Travel Authorization and/or Travel Reimbursement Form must be included with all credit card receipts to provide a complete audit trail.

Any time a purchase is made using the credit card, whether it is done over the counter, over the internet, or by telephone, a detailed itemized receipt should be obtained by the cardholder. The cardholder must submit detailed receipts and a purchase order/voucher made payable to the credit card company to the elected official/department head. The elected official/department head will indicate on the purchase order/voucher the budget line item number to which each transaction is to be charged, and then submit the purchase order/voucher for payment following currently accepted procedures. Cardholders and their supervisor are responsible for ensuring that all expenses are eligible county purchases.

Cardholders and supervisors are also responsible to make sure the approved information is submitted in a timely manner each month. This information will be used by the County Auditor to reconcile the credit card statement. Summary receipts that do not itemize what was purchased, including receipts for meals, are not acceptable. The cardholder will reimburse expenditures not supported with itemized receipts.

If the receipt has been misplaced or the receipt is not itemized, the amount of the expenditure will be charged to the cardholder through payroll deduction. The cardholder will then be required to submit the appropriate detailed and itemized receipt to the Auditor in order to be reimbursed. In the event there are disputed charges, the cardholder should complete the Cardholder Statement of Disputed Items form and present it to the elected official/department head, who will then forward it to the Auditor. In the event an item is returned, the cardholder will make a copy of the credit for the elected official/department head and give the original to the Auditor for reconciling back to the budget line from which the original invoice was paid.

Elected officials are responsible for requesting an employee's participation in the Credit Card Program. Whenever the employment of a cardholder ends, or the need for the credit card ends, the elected official/department head should make sure the card is returned to the County Auditor. The credit card program should be periodically reviewed by the elected official/department head to evaluate if the needs of the department are being met and whether the department should continue using the credit cards.

The county is tax-exempt. The cardholder should ensure that credit card purchases do not include sales tax. The county's tax exemption can be obtained from the County Auditor.

In order to help comply with IRS 1099 reporting requirements, the credit card should not be used to pay non-corporate entities for personal or professional services.

Should the cardholder lose or have their credit card stolen, it is the responsibility of the cardholder to notify the elected official/department head and the County Auditor immediately or within one (1) business day after discovery of the loss or theft of the card. The cardholder will be required to make a written report to the County Auditor on the Credit Card Lost/Stolen Report form within five (5) business days that will include the complete information on the loss, the date the loss was discovered, the location where the loss occurred, if known, the purchases that the cardholder had made prior to the loss, and any other information that may be considered as needed.

Misuse and abuse of the credit card privilege may result in temporary suspension of card use or cancellation of the credit card. Depending on the severity and repeat nature of the offense, improper use of the card may be considered misappropriation of county funds that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination or referral to the Bosque County Sheriff for investigation.

The credit card may **not** be used to purchase the following items, including but not limited to:

- Goods or services from a county employee or member of their immediate family
- Personal expenses except those incidental to travel and those that would be normally be reimbursed by the county
- Expenses for birthdays, going away parties, gifts, flowers, bosses day, secretaries day or any other occasion that is not considered necessary to carry on business
- Alcoholic beverages

- Maintenance of equipment, where an agreement must be signed by the vendor.
- Purchases under contracts, unless an emergency exists and the elected official/department head approve purchases.
- Cash advances or refunds
- Expenditures for entertainment
- Transaction amounts greater than cardholder's limit
- Separate, sequential, and component purchases or transactions intended to circumvent state law or county policy.

See credit card user agreement for additional rules.

C -13 SOCIAL MEDIA

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

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

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

- If your posts on social media mention Bosque County, make clear that you are an employee of Bosque County and that the views posted are yours alone and do not represent the views of Bosque County.
- Do not mention Bosque County supervisors, employees, constituents, or vendors without their express consent.
- Do not pick fights. If you see a misrepresentation about Bosque County, respond respectfully with factual information, not inflammatory comments.
- Remember, you are responsible for what you write or present on social media. You can be sued by other employees, supervisors, constituents or vendors, and any individual that views your social media posts as defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libelous or creating a hostile work environment. Employees can be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination for what they post on social media platforms, even if the employee did not use a county computer or if the post did not occur during work hours or on county property.
- Employees may not use Bosque County computer equipment for non-work related activities without written permission. Social media activities should not interfere with your duties at work. Bosque County monitors its computers to ensure compliance with this restriction.
- You must comply with copyright laws, and cite or reference sources accurately.
- Do not link to Bosque County's website or post Bosque County material on a social media site without written permission from your supervisor.

- All Bosque County policies that regulate off-duty conduct apply to social media activity including, but not limited to, policies related to illegal harassment and code of conduct.
- Any confidential information that you obtained through your position at Bosque County is confidential and cannot be discussed in social media forum.
- Violation of this policy may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATIONS AND SERVICES PROHIBITED ON COUNTY DEVICES

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

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

Violation of this policy may lead to discipline up to and including the immediate termination of employment.

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

C -14 PRIVACY

The Bosque County retains basic employee information in individual personnel files. Due to the confidential nature of the employee files, and the county's desire to protect employee personal information, all access to personnel files is strictly controlled by the Human Resources Department. Personnel files cannot be removed from the premises.

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

Protected health information is any information (whether electronic, oral, or in paper format) that is used to identify an individual's physical or mental health condition, the health care services provided to an individual, or the payment of those services. This information is private and confidential. The county takes precautions to protect health information from inappropriate disclosure.

All employees have a responsibility to respect and maintain the privacy and confidentiality of another employee's protected health information. Anyone inappropriately disclosing such information, without prior authorization or permission, will be subject to the county's disciplinary procedures.

C -15 CONFIDENTIALITY

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

Employees should lock or secure confidential information at all times. Confidential documents should be viewed on secure devices only.

Confidential information may occasionally have to be disclosed for legitimate reasons such as requests for such information by regulatory entities or other third parties as part of an investigation, legal procedure, or audit. In such cases, employees involved should document their disclosure procedure and collect all needed authorizations from the elected official, department head or county attorney. The county will adhere to the Public Information Act requirements.

This policy applies to all employees, including commissioners, elected officials, department heads and staff members and is binding on all employees even after separation of employment.

C -16 OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Bosque County employees are expected to give their full and undivided attention to their job duties. They should not use Bosque County facilities, equipment, or their association with Bosque County to carry on a private business or profession. Unless express approval is obtained in advance and in writing from their immediate supervisor, county employees should not engage in a profit-making business nor become involved with a non-profit organization outside of their employment with Bosque County that interferes with assigned duties with Bosque County or presents a conflict of interest.

C -17 EMPLOYEE SAFETY

Bosque County is committed to providing a safe workplace for our employees. Each county employee must adhere to the general safety standards established for all employees as well as comply with their departmental safety requirements. Safety procedures may differ at each county department. Your supervisor will provide you with specific information pertaining to your position.

In order to promote the safety of employees and county visitors, as well as the security of its facilities, Bosque County may conduct video surveillance of any portion of county properties at any time, the only exception being private areas of restrooms, showers, and dressing rooms, and that video cameras will be positioned in appropriate places within and around county buildings and used in order to help promote the safety and security of people and property.

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

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

C-18 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Bosque County is committed to providing a workplace free of violence. Bosque County will not tolerate or condone violence of any kind in the workplace. The county will also not tolerate or condone any threats of violence, direct or indirect, this includes jokes. All threats will be taken seriously and will be investigated. Employees must refrain from any conduct or comments that might make another employee suspicious or in fear for their safety. Employees are required to report all suspicious conduct or comments to their immediate supervisor. Employees should be aware of their surroundings at all times and report any suspicious behavior from the public, former employees or current employees to their immediate supervisor or the sheriff's department. If employees believe that a person is violating this policy, they should immediately report to their immediate supervisor or the sheriff's department. Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to discipline up to and including immediate termination.

C-19 WEATHER CLOSINGS AND EMERGENCIES

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

The County Judge will notify the Emergency Management Coordinator in situations of severe weather or other emergencies causing emergency closing, to the extent possible, and specify the starting and ending times of the closing. The Emergency Management Coordinator will notify employees by using the Emergency Notification System. Each employee is responsible for providing contact information to the Emergency Management Coordinator's office so that the employee will receive the notification. However, each elected official controls the working hours of their employees, even in an emergency situation.

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

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D. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

D - 1 HEALTH PLANS

All regular full time employees of Bosque County who work 30 or more hours per week shall be eligible for the group medical plan. Regular part time and temporary part time employees who work less than 30 hours a week will not be eligible for insurance. Employees shall be eligible for coverage on the first day of the month following date of hire; however, if the date of hire falls on the first day of the month, there is no delay in coverage. Examples: Hire date June 2nd, coverage effective July 1. Hire date June 1, effective date June 1.

Premiums for the coverage for eligible employees shall be paid entirely by Bosque County.

Eligible employees may cover their qualified dependents by paying the full premium for the dependents. Deductions for dependent coverage shall be made through payroll deduction from the employee's paycheck each pay period. Details of coverage under the group medical insurance plan are available in the Human Resources Department during the normal working hours for that office.

Employees who leave the employment of Bosque County or who lose their coverage eligibility, may be eligible for an extension of the medical plan for themselves and their eligible dependents under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA). If an employee is unable to return to work following FMLA leave, if eligible, they will be offered COBRA. Information on extension of benefits under COBRA is available in the County Human Resource Office and may be obtained during the normal working hours for that office. COBRA notifications will be provided to all employees within 30 days of their hire date. All eligible employees and qualified dependents will be provided with COBRA information following their termination

Dental, Vision, Cafeteria Plans

Bosque County provides supplemental insurance coverage. Optional coverage includes: Dental, Vision, Life, Short and Long Term Disability, Accident, Cancer and Critical Illness. All supplemental insurance coverage premiums are the responsibility of the employee. Information regarding these supplemental insurances may be obtained from Human Resources.

D - 2 VACATION : *Policy change effective 01/01/2025.*

All regular full-time employees will be eligible for vacation benefits. Part-time and temporary employees will not be eligible for vacation benefits.

Employees who work at least 40 hours per week and have worked for less than 7 years in a position eligible to receive vacation will accrue vacation on their anniversary date at the rate of 80 hours per year. If the employee is a 30 hour per week employee, then on their anniversary date only 60 hours per year will accrue.

Employees who work at least 40 hours and have worked for 7 or more years in a position eligible to receive vacation will accrue vacation on their anniversary date at the rate of 120 hours per year. If the employee is a 30 hour per week employee and has worked for seven or more years, then on their anniversary date only 90 hours per year will accrue.

Employees who work at least 40 hours and have worked for 15 or more years in a position eligible to receive vacation will accrue vacation on their anniversary date at the rate of 160 hours per year. If the employee is a 30 hour per week employee and has worked for seven or more years, then on their anniversary date only 120 hours per year will accrue.

New hires will accrue on their 6 month anniversary date 40 hours of vacation time and on their one year anniversary date another 40 hours.

Vacation may be used for paid vacation, personal business, religious observances, military leave, or paid time off for illnesses. However, all earned compensatory time must be used prior to earned vacation time. Scheduling of vacations will be at the discretion of the individual department heads. If a holiday falls during an employee's vacation then the employee will not be charged for the vacation.

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

Vacation time is a privilege allowed by the county to give the employee time away from the work environment. Scheduling of vacations shall be at the discretion of the individual department head. Vacation time is to be used in the calendar year in which it is accrued, or it can be rolled over to the next year.

The maximum balance of vacation hours that can be accrued is 240 hours.

When the maximum balance is reached, no more vacation can be accrued. Employees shall only be able to use vacation which has already been accrued and will not be allowed to borrow vacation against possible future accruals.

Employees shall not be allowed to receive pay for vacation in lieu of taking time off.

Upon separation employees who provide a two weeks' notice in writing may be paid out up to 80 hours accrued, unused vacation time. If employee is terminated for "at-will" or for cause, they may also be paid out up to 80 hours accrued, unused vacation time. Employees that voluntarily separate and do not provide notice or are terminated for gross misconduct, will not be eligible for vacation payout.

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

Only the appropriate amount of vacation hours will be used to account for the minimum number of hours needed for the designated work week/ work period. (i.e. 40 regular full time employees or 80 law enforcement/jailers).

Compensatory time shall be used prior to vacation. Vacation time cannot be used to extend employment for resigning employees. An employee's date of termination will be the last date the employee actually works.

Use of time off during an employee's notice period when their resignation has been tendered is at the discretion of the elected official

Employees that become ineligible for vacation due to separation of employment or to moving to a part time position, will lose any previously banked vacation time. If reinstated to a full time position, then accruals will start over with new full time reinstatement date as if they are a newly hired employee.

D - 3 HOLIDAYS *Policy change effective 01/01/2025.*

All regular full time employees that work 40 hours per week will be eligible for the paid holiday benefit of 8 hours. If the employee is a 30 to 39 hour per week employee, then their holiday accrual will be an average of their weekly hourly work schedule divided by 5 days. The Bosque County Commissioners' Court will determine the county holidays.

If a paid holiday occurs during other paid leave of an eligible employee, that day will be paid as a holiday and not be charged against the employee's leave balance. An employee will not be allowed to take a day off with pay prior to a holiday in anticipation of working on the holiday.

All county employees are limited to the total number of official holidays approved by the court times eight (8) hours as paid time off. For every holiday that is earned by the employees of the county, the same holiday is banked for all personnel when the holiday occurs for those that are scheduled to work the holiday. The maximum days/hours allowed to accrue will be the total number of holidays allowed by the court, determined each year. Employees reaching the maximum number holiday hours allowed to accrue will forfeit any hours above the maximum hours allowed. The Maximum number of holiday hours for 2025 is 120 Holiday Hours.

2025 Holidays approved by Commissioners Court:

Holiday	Actual Date	Date to be observed
New Year's Day	1/1/2025	Wednesday, 1/1/2024
Martin Luther King Day	1/20/2025	Monday, 1/20/2025
Presidents' Day	2/17/2024	Monday 2/17/2025
Good Friday	4/18/2025	Friday, 04/18/2025
Memorial Day	5/26/2024	Monday, 5/26/2025
Juneteenth	6/19/2025	Thursday, 6/19/2025
Independence Day	7/4/2025	Friday, 7/4/2025
Labor Day	9/1/2025	Monday, 9/1/2025
Columbus Day	10/13/2025	Monday, 10/13/2025
Veterans Day	11/11/2025	Tuesday, 11/11/2025
Thanksgiving	11/27/2025	Thur, 11/27 - Fri 11/28/2025
Christmas	12/25/2025	Wed, 12/24 - Fri 12/26/2025

An employee may take the holiday as they would a vacation day or a personal day. The time off will be charged against their holiday bank. However, if an employee has compensation time accrued, they must use that time prior to using holiday time off.

Holidays are a time off benefit, not pay in lieu of time off.

Only the appropriate amount of holiday hours will be used to account for the minimum number of hours needed for the designated work week/ work period. (i.e. 40 regular full time employee or 80 law enforcement/jailer).

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

Upon separation from the county, employees forfeit any unused holiday time accrued, no compensation shall be received for holiday time forfeited.

D - 4 PERSONAL TIME OFF *Policy change effective 01/01/2025.*

All regular full time employees shall be eligible for the paid personal leave benefit. Employees who work at least 40 hours per week will accrue Personal leave on their anniversary date at the rate of 80 hours per year. If the employee is a 30 hour per week employee, then on their anniversary date only 60 hours per year will accrue.

All regular part time employees shall be eligible for the paid personal leave benefit. Employees who work part time will accrue Personal leave on their anniversary date at the rate of an average one work week budgeted hours. Example: if the position is budgeted for a 20-hour work week, the employee will accrue 20 hours of Personal Leave on their anniversary date.

New hires will accrue on their 6-month anniversary date half of their annual personal leave benefit and on their one-year anniversary date the remainder of their first year personal leave benefit. Example: Full time employees will accrue 40 hours at 6 months and 40 hours at 1 year. Part time employee with a 20-hour accrual will accrue 10 hours at 6 months and 10 hours at 1 year.

The personal time benefit is to give the employee sick time and time to take care of personal business. Employees shall not be allowed to borrow personal leave against future accruals.

The maximum balance of personal hours that can be accrued is 480 hours.

Where personal time off shall be used for sick leave, if the employee feels that the situation will cause the employee to miss more than one day of work, the employee should notify their supervisor of the anticipated length of absence. The employee shall be placed on FMLA, if event and employee is eligible. If an employee uses three (3) or more consecutive days of sick leave, the supervisor shall have the right to require a physician's statement or some other acceptable documentation of injury or illness, for either the employees own illness or the illness of an immediate family member. Employees who have a pattern of abusing sick leave

may be required to provide a physician's statement for those absences as required by their supervisor.

Personal time shall not be accrued while an employee is on leave without pay. Employees shall not be paid for unused personal leave at the termination of employment.

Only the appropriate amount of personal hours will be used to account for the minimum number of hours needed for the designated work week/ work period. (i.e. 40 Regular full time employees or 80 law enforcement/jailers).

Employees that become ineligible for personal time off due to separation of employment or to moving to a part time position, shall lose any previously banked personal time. If reinstated to a full time position, then accruals will start over with new full time reinstatement date as if they are a newly hired employee.

D – 5 COVID SICK LEAVE

This policy eliminated 01/01/2025. Available Covid Sick leave balances transferred to Personal Leave 01/01/2025.

D – 6 HB2073 PAID QUARANTINE LEAVE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT AND JAILERS

Bosque County shall provide paid quarantine leave for peace officers and detention officers employed by Bosque 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 all peace officers and detention officers as defined by this policy, who are employed, appointed or elected to their position.

"Peace officer" means an individual described by Article 2.12, Code of Criminal Procedure, who is elected, employed or appointed by the county. "Detention officer" means an individual appointed or employed by a county as a county jailer or other individual responsible for the care and custody of individuals incarcerated in a county jail. "Health authority" has the meaning assigned by Section 121.021, Health and Safety Code. A health authority is a physician appointed under the provisions of Chapter 121 to administer state and local laws relating to public health within the appointing body's jurisdiction. A health authority must be: a competent physician with a reputable professional standing who is legally qualified to practice medicine in the state and a resident of the state. They must take an official oath and file with the department.

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

Quarantine leave events should be reported by the department supervisor using the Quarantine Leave Request Form. This form will be submitted to Human Resources. Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to Human Resources.

Off duty exposures will not be covered under this policy.

If during the quarantine period the employee becomes ill, the event will then transfer to worker's compensation and FMLA policies.

D – 7 FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT/MILITARY FAMILY LEAVE (FMLA/MFL)

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

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

ELIGIBILITY:

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

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

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

QUALIFYING EVENTS:

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

1. the birth of a child and to care for that child;
2. the placement of a child in the employee's home for adoption or foster care;
3. to care for a spouse, child (under the age of 18 or if over 18 incapable of self-care due to a disability), or parent with a serious health condition;
4. the serious health condition of the employee that make the employee unable to perform the essential functions of their job;
5. a qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that an employee's spouse, child or parent is a covered military member of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve or National Guard), deployed to a foreign country or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty in a foreign country;
6. to care for a covered service member (Regular, Reserve or National Guard) with a serious injury or illness if the employee is the spouse, child, parent or next of kin (nearest blood relative) of the service member; or
7. to care for a covered veteran who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation or therapy, for a serious injury or illness and who was a member of the Armed Forces (Regular, Reserve or National Guard) at any time during the period of 5 years preceding the date on which the veteran began that medical treatment, recuperation or therapy.

SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITION:

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

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

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

QUALIFYING EXIGENCY LEAVE:

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

Qualifying exigencies may include:

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

LENGTH OF LEAVE:

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

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

MILITARY CAREGIVER LEAVE:

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

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

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

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

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

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

WORK RELATED INJURY:

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

PAID AND UNPAID LEAVE:

Bosque County requires substitution of paid leave for all FMLA or MFL events. Employees must first use all of their earned compensatory time for FMLA or MFL events prior to using accrued vacation, personal or banked holiday leave. An employee must follow the vacation,

personal and holiday policy guidelines. The balance of FMLA is unpaid leave. FMLA and MFL run concurrently with all substituted paid leave, including worker's compensation leave.

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

CONTINUED EMPLOYEE BENEFITS:

While an employee is on leave under this policy, the county will continue to pay the employee's medical plan premium at the same rate as if the employee had been actively at work. The employee is required to pay for dependent coverage and for any other coverage for which the employee would normally pay, or the coverage will be discontinued. An employee's obligation to pay for coverage will be made through regular payroll deduction while the employee is on paid leave status. While on unpaid leave, the employee is required to pay for premiums due to the county by personal check or money order payable to Bosque County and mailed or delivered to the Human Resources Office, P.O. Box 647, Meridian, TX 76665 no later than 30 days after the date of the pay period in which the premium comes due. The county may cancel unpaid coverage by providing the employee advance written notice, not less than 15 days before the coverage will be cancelled for non-payment.

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

INTERMITTENT LEAVE AND REDUCED SCHEDULE:

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

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

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

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

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

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

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

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

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

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

REQUESTING LEAVE:

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

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

REINSTATEMENT:

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

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

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

REPAYMENT OF BENEFITS:

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

OTHER BENEFITS:

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

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

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

REGULATION:

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

RETURN-TO-WORK:

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

ENFORCEMENT:

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

D - 8 BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

All eligible employees shall be allowed up to 3 days leave with pay, for a death in the immediate family. Days are calculated as the normal scheduled hours for that employee's position. For purposes of this policy, immediate family shall include the employee's spouse and the child, foster child, parent, sibling or grandparent of the employee or the employee's spouse. Employees may be allowed time off with pay, up to a maximum of 4 hours, to attend the funeral of a relative who is not a member of the immediate family or the funeral of a

friend. If leave is needed beyond the limits set in this policy, it may be charged to available compensatory, vacation, or personal time or to leave without pay.

D – 9 MILITARY LEAVE

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

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

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

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

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

D - 10 LEAVE OF ABSENCE – OTHER

All regular full time employees may request a personal leave of absence to a maximum of 90 days. Personal leaves of absence may include reasons such as extended vacations, continuing education, extended bereavement, or other personal matters. Personal leaves of absence are granted solely at the discretion of the elected official, appointed official, or department head.

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

D -11 JURY DUTY

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

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

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

D -12 LONGEVITY – Updated 07/15/2024

Bosque County Commissioners Court has long recognized and rewarded employees for their continued services to the county. All regular full time employees and elected officials shall be eligible for the longevity pay benefit after one (1) year continuous service in an eligible position.

Longevity pay will equal \$10.00 per month for each completed month of continuous full time service as of December 31st. Employees shall receive a minimum longevity payment of \$300 as set forth in Commissioner's Court in 2019.

When an employee or elected official becomes eligible for longevity pay, that pay will be paid on the first payroll in December.

- Example: Employee has 10 months' service time, they do not receive Longevity Pay
- Example: Employee has 1 year 5 months' service time, they receive \$300 Longevity Pay
- Example: Employee has 18 years' service time, they receive \$2160 Longevity Pay

Employees that become ineligible for longevity due to separation of employment or moving to a part time position, will lose any previous service time. If reinstated to a full time position, then service time will start over with new full time reinstatement date.

A prior court cannot obligate a future court, therefore this policy will be subject to review and modification each year during budget hearings. Any future changes will be contingent upon other budgetary considerations and subject to the availability of funds in the budget.

D - 13 CERTIFICATE AND EDUCATION PAY POLICY

The purpose of the Certificate and Education Pay is to attract qualified applicants and encourage current employees to improve their level of certification and education.

All degrees, licenses, or certificates granted must be supported with evidence by a recognized and accredited institution attesting that an individual has met certain specified experience,

training or educational requirements. For college degrees, an official copy of the transcript will be provided by the employee. Only one-degree supplement will be applied, the highest degree achieved.

- Peace Officers, Jailers, and Dispatchers may receive certificate pay based on certification issued by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Education (TCOLE).
 - Qualified personnel can be awarded up to three certificate pay stipends based on departmental needs and sheriff approval.
 - Peace Officers, Jailers, and Dispatchers may choose either education (degree) pay or certificate (TCOLE Intermediate, Advanced, Master), they cannot receive both, however, they still qualify for specialized skills certificates.
- CDL License holders will be verified by their state issued driver's license and clearinghouse report.
- Bilingual Pay recipients will have attestation from their managing elected official and follow the guidelines set in the attestation.

Certificates must be applicable to current position held. For example, a certified jailer working in Human Resources office would not qualify for Jailer Certificate Pay.

Certificate Pay types and amounts are set by commissioner's court. Request's for a new certificate type to be added to the policy must be requested during the budget process to be considered.

Certificate pay will be paid out monthly on the first payroll of the month. Change requests when new certificates or degrees have been earned will go into effect the first payroll after receiving the requested change and must be within the departmental budget to be approved. If budget is not available, the change will go into effect the first payroll after the new budget. Back pay will not apply.

Certificate / Education pay applies to regular full time elected officials and employees only.

Maximum amount allowed for Certificate and Education pay for any single employee is \$5,000 annually.

Below is a listing of Approved Certificate / Education Amounts and positions they apply to:

<u>All Elected Officials & Employees</u>	<u>Annual Amount</u>	<u>Road and Bridge Elected Officials & Employees</u>	<u>Annual Amount</u>
Associate's Degree	\$1,000	CDL License - Class A	\$2,400
Bachelor's Degree	\$2,000	CDL License - Class B	\$1,200
Master's Degree	\$3,000		
Bilingual / Interpreter	\$480		

<u>Certificate Peace Officer</u>	<u>Annual Amount</u>	<u>Certificate Jailer</u>	<u>Annual Amount</u>	<u>Certificate Dispatcher</u>	<u>Annual Amount</u>
Peace Officer-Intermediate	\$900	Jailer- Intermediate	\$700	Communicator-Intermediate	\$700
Peace Officer-Advanced	\$1,600	Jailer- Advanced	\$1,200	Communicator-Advanced	\$1,200
Peace Officer- Master	\$2,200	Jailer-Master	\$1,800	Communicator-Master	\$1,800

<u>Specialized Skills Training Peace Officer</u>	<u>Annual Amount</u>	<u>Specialized Skills Training Jailer</u>	<u>Annual Amount</u>	<u>Specialized Skills Training Dispatcher</u>	<u>Annual Amount</u>
FTO	\$1,000	FTO	\$1,000	FTO	\$1,000
SWAT Basic	\$900	Paramedic	\$1,000	Mental Health	\$500
SWAT Advanced	\$1,800	Mental Health	\$500	Instructor	\$1,000
K9	\$1,600	Armed Jailer	\$500	Dual Certified	\$300
Instructor	\$1,000	Court Security Officer	\$500		
Mental Health	\$900	Basic SWAT	\$900		
Intoxilizer Operator	\$700	Dual Certified	\$300		
School Resource Officer	\$500				
Fire Arms Instructor	\$500				
Dual Certified	\$300				
Environmental Crimes	\$1,000				

D - 14 WORKERS COMPENSATION

All Bosque County employees are covered by workers' compensation coverage while on duty for the county. Workers' compensation coverage pays for medical bills resulting from a covered injury or illness an employee incurs while carrying out the duties of their job. Workers' compensation also pays Temporary Income Benefits (TIBS) for time lost from work in excess of seven calendar days as the result of eligible work related injuries or illnesses, with the exception of Law Enforcement employees who receive salary continuation. Employees may use paid leave for all workers compensation time off less than 8 days.

All employees who are placed on workers compensation leave will fall under the Family Medical Leave Act. Bosque County runs FMLA and workers' compensation concurrently.

Any employee who suffers a job related illness or injury is required to notify their supervisor and the Human Resources Department as soon as possible. Failure to promptly report job related injuries or illnesses may affect an employee's eligibility for benefits or delay benefit payments. Employees on leave due to a work related injury are to advise the department head or elected official of his or her status at least once per week.

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

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

D -15 RETIREMENT

Bosque County participates in the Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS). Mandatory participation in the Retirement Plan is required by State Law for all full-time and part-time county employees. Each regular full/part time employee shall contribute five percent (5%) of their gross pay to the retirement through a system of payroll deduction. An employee is vested after 8 years of service. Temporary and seasonal employees will not be eligible for retirement benefits. Bosque County shall make a contribution to each eligible employee retirement account according to requirements of TCDRS. Information on the retirement program may be obtained at the Human Resources Department or online at TCDRS.org.

Group Term Life

Bosque County provides Group Term Life for all regular full time and part time employees enrolled in the TCDRS Retirement Plan. The TCDRS Group Term Life program provides the beneficiary of a covered employee with a single payment of a year's worth of that employee's salary or wages, should they pass away. Coverage for this policy is only available while you are current employee of the county and making deposits into your TCDRS account.

457 Deferred Compensation Plan

Bosque County offers an optional tax-deferred retirement savings program called a Deferred Compensation 457(b) plan. Although there are no employer contributions associated with the program, employees can defer up to the maximum annual salary deferral limits set by the IRS. For more information on this plan, contact Human resources.

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E. EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

E - 1 EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

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

If an employee needs an accommodation as the result of a condition or status protected by law, please advise your elected official, appointed official, department head, human resources, or county attorney. Requests for accommodations will be reviewed for qualified individuals. Reasonable accommodations will be made in accordance with applicable law.

Any incident of prohibited discrimination or retaliation should be reported verbally or in writing to the department head, human resources, the elected or appointed official for the specific department, human resources or the county attorney.

E - 2 AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT AMENDMENTS ACT

It is Bosque County's policy to reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with disabilities unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the county. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended (ADAAA), reasonable accommodations may be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities when such accommodations are necessary to enable them to perform the essential functions of their jobs, or to enjoy the equal benefits and privileges of employment. This policy applies to all applicants for employment, and all employees. If you require accommodation, please contact your elected official, appointed official, department head, human resources or the county attorney. Reasonable accommodation shall be determined through an interactive process of consultation.

ADA Reasonable Accommodation: Service Animals

Bosque County does not allow animals in the workplace; however, an individual with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act to bring a service animal to work when medically necessary. In general, a service animal is an animal trained to work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.

Bosque County will evaluate all requests to bring a service animal into the workplace to determine if the accommodation is reasonable and can be provided without undue hardship. If an accommodation is granted to allow a service animal in the workplace the arrangement may be permitted on a temporary or trial basis. Reasonable behavior is expected from service animals while on count property. Disruptive and aggressive service animals must be removed from the premises immediately and permission to bring the animal to work will be revoked.

The employee must be in full control of the animal at all times. The care and supervision of the animal is the sole responsibility of the employee. The employee is expected to clean up after and dispose of all animal waste appropriately.

It is the policy of Bosque County to prohibit any harassment of, or discriminatory treatment of employees on the basis of a disability or because an employee has requested a reasonable accommodation. If an employee feels he or she has been subject to such treatment, or has witnessed such treatment, the situation should be reported to your elected official, appointed official, department head, human resources or the county attorney. All elected officials, appointed officials, department heads and employees with responsibilities requiring knowledge are instructed to treat the employee's disability with confidentiality.

E - 3 PREGNANT WORKERS FAIRNESS ACT

It is the policy of Bosque County to prohibit any harassment of, or discriminatory treatment of employees based on known limitations related to, affected by, or arising out of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions or because an employee has requested a reasonable accommodation. If an employee feels they have been subject to such treatment, or has witnessed such treatment, the situation should be reported to your elected official, appointed official, department head, human resources or the county attorney. All elected officials, appointed officials, department heads, and employees with responsibilities requiring knowledge are instructed to treat the employee's limitation with confidentiality.

It is Bosque County's policy to reasonably accommodate applicants and employees with known limitations related to, affected by, or arising out of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the county. If you require an accommodation, please contact your elected official, appointed official, department head, human resources or the county attorney. Reasonable accommodation shall be determined through an interactive process of consultation.

E - 4 FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT SAFE HARBOR

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

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

Non-exempt employees, unless authorized by your supervisor, should not work any hours that are not authorized. Do not start work early, finish work late, work during a meal break,

or perform any other extra or overtime work unless you are authorized to do so. Time worked is to be recorded on your electronic time record. Employees are prohibited from performing any "off-the-clock" work. "Off-the-clock" work means work you may perform but fail to report on your electronic time record. Any employee who fails to report or inaccurately reports any hours worked will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. If anyone directs you to work without documenting your time worked, please report to the Human Resources Department.

It is a violation of Bosque County policy for any employee to **falsify** an electronic time record, or to alter another employee's electronic time record. It is also a serious violation of county policy for any employee, supervisor or official to instruct another employee to incorrectly or falsely report hours worked, or to **alter** another employee's electronic time record to under-or-over-report hours worked. If anyone instructs you to (1) incorrectly or falsely under-or-over-report your hours worked, or (2) alter another employee's time records to inaccurately or falsely report that employee's hours worked, you should report it immediately to the Human Resources Department PO Box 647, Meridian, Texas 76665; (254) 978-4810.

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

For exempt employees, your salary may also be reduced for certain types of deductions such as your portion of health, dental or life premiums; state, federal or local taxes, social security, retirement; or, voluntary contributions to a deferred compensation plan. In any workweek in which you performed any work, your wages may be reduced for any of the following reasons: 1) absence from work for one or more full days for personal reasons, other than sickness or disability; or 2) full day disciplinary suspensions for infractions of our written policies and procedures; or 3) full day for violating safety rules of a major significance; or 4) Family and Medical Leave or Military Leave absences; or 5) to offset amounts received as payment for jury and witness fees or military pay; or 6) the first or last week of employment in the event you work less than a full week.

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

If you have questions about deductions from your pay, please immediately contact your supervisor. If you believe you have been subject to any improper deductions or your pay does not accurately reflect your hours worked, you should immediately report the matter to the Human Resources Department PO Box 647, Meridian, Texas 76665; (254) 978-4810. If you are unsure of who to contact or if you have not received a satisfactory response within five business days after reporting the incident, please immediately contact the County

Attorney, P.O. Box 215, Meridian, Texas 76665; (254) 435-2186. Every report will be fully investigated and corrective action will be taken where appropriate, up to and including discharge for any employee(s) who violates this policy. In addition, the county will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals who report alleged violations of this policy or who cooperate in the county's investigation of such reports. Retaliation is unacceptable, and any form of retaliation in violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

E - 5 PERSONNEL FILES

The Bosque County Human Resources Department will retain basic employee information in an individual personnel file. This file will include all pertinent employment documents such as resume, application, W-4, handbook acknowledgement, and records concerning performance, discipline and compensation. Due to the confidential nature of personnel files, and the county's desire to protect an employee's personal information, all access to personnel files will be strictly controlled.

It is important that the personnel records of Bosque County be accurate at all times. In order to avoid issues, compromising your benefit eligibility or having W2's returned, Bosque County requests employees to promptly notify the Human Resources Department of any change in name, home address, telephone number, marital status, number of dependents, or of any other pertinent information.

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

E - 6 GRIEVANCES

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

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

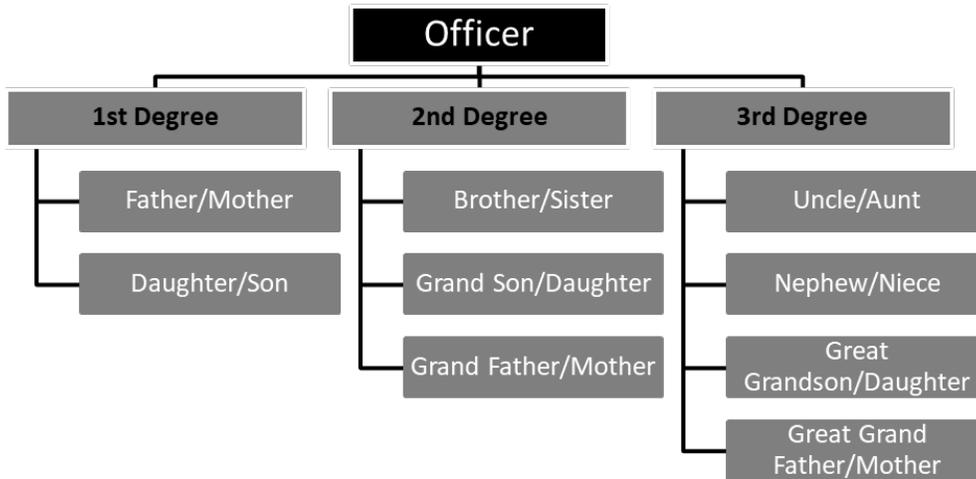
E - 7 TOBACCO/SMOKE FREE WORKPLACE

Bosque County endeavors to provide a healthy environment. Therefore, any form of tobacco or vaping consumed in county buildings and county vehicles is strictly prohibited. Additionally, no smoking is allowed within ten (10) feet of the exterior entranceways. This policy applies to all visitors as well as to all employees. Visitors should be informed of this policy when necessary.

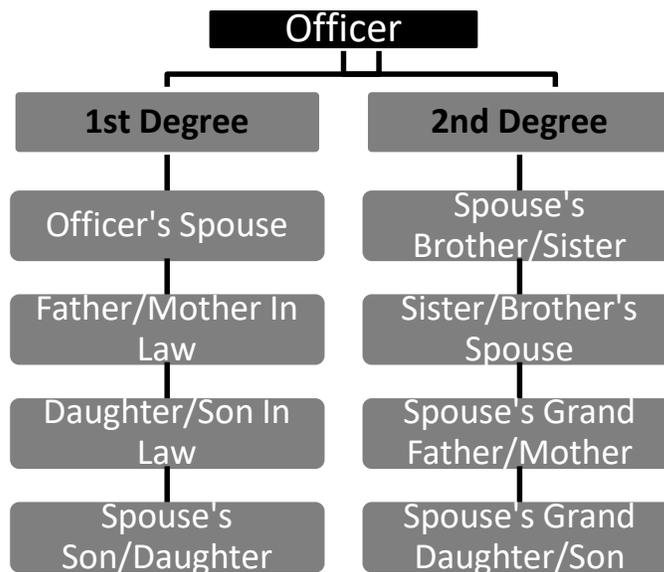
E - 8 NEPOTISM

Under Texas Government Code Chapter 573, a Public Official of Bosque County is prohibited from hiring a relative related within the third degree of consanguinity (blood) or within the second degree of affinity (marriage) to work in a department that he or she supervises or exercises control over. A degree of relationship is determined under Texas Government Code Chapter 573. (See the charts that follow.)

**CONSANGUINITY KINSHIP CHART
(Relationship by Blood)**



**AFFINITY KINSHIP CHART
(Relationship by Marriage)**



E - 9 HARASSMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

E – 10 DRUG AND ALCOHOL – ALL EMPLOYEES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pre-employment drug testing:

Bosque County has a pre-employment drug testing requirement that must be passed post offer before an employee starts their first day of work. All offers of employment are conditional upon passing a drug and alcohol test. The employee will sign a consent waiver.

Suspicion-Based Testing:

Under the Influence shall be defined as having a blood alcohol concentration of .04 or more.

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

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

- Constant fatigue or hyperactivity
- Smell of alcohol
- Difficulty walking
- Excessive, unexplained absences
- Dulled mental processes
- Slow reaction rate

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

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

Post-Accident Testing:

All employees directly involved in an on-the-job accident or incident resulting in property damage and/or medical treatment may be required to be tested. This will be at the discretion of their elected official or supervisor.

Testing Procedures –

1. The employee will be escorted and driven to the designated facility for specimen collection and/or testing.
2. The employee will be required to follow the drug testing protocol of the medical facility providing the testing.
3. If the employee desires another test to be given, they may do so within 2 hours of the specimen being collected and the same specimen will be used. The cost of this

request will be paid for by the employee. All initial costs will be paid for by Bosque County.

4. The employee will be placed on paid administrative leave until the results of the test are known. The elected official or supervisor will make arrangements to ensure that the employee is safely returned to their residence.
5. Under no circumstances, unless required or authorized by law, will alcohol or drug testing information be released without written consent from the employee.

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

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

E -11 DRUG AND ALCOHOL – CDL DRIVERS

CDL Drivers are an extremely valuable resource for Bosque County's business. Their health and safety is a serious county concern. Drug or alcohol use may pose 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.

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

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

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

A detailed policy and procedure is available at the Human Resources office.

E -12 DEMOTIONS

Demotions are the movement of an employee from one position to another with a decreased responsibility or complexity of job duties or to a lower salary. Elected officials, appointed officials or department heads may choose to demote or re-assign any employees

who are unable to meet performance requirements, for disciplinary reasons or for any other reason as deemed necessary by the official. Upon demotion, an employee's salary may be adjusted downward.

E -13 TRANSFERS

Transfers are the lateral movement of an employee from one position to another with the same responsibility or complexity of job duties with no change in salary. Elected officials, appointed officials or department heads may transfer an employee in their department to a vacant position. All transfers must be handled in accordance with the budget adopted by Commissioners Court.

E -14 PROMOTIONS

Promotions are the movement of an employee from one position to another with an increased responsibility or complexity of job duties, and to a higher salary. Elected officials, appointed officials or department heads may promote an employee in their department to a vacant position. All promotions must be handled in accordance with the budget adopted by Commissioners Court.

E-15 SEPARATIONS

A separation shall be defined as any situation in which the employer-employee relationship between the county and a county employee ends. All separations from Bosque County will be designated as one of the following types: 1) resignation; 2) retirement; 3) dismissal; 4) reduction in force; or 5) death.

A resignation will be classified as any situation in which an employee voluntarily leaves their employment with Bosque County and the separation does not fall into one of the other categories. Employees who are resigning should submit a written notice of resignation to their supervisor and the supervisor shall forward to the Bosque County Human Resources Department within 48 hours. An employee who does not report for work for three (3) consecutive scheduled workdays, and who fails to notify their supervisor, will be considered to have resigned their position by abandonment.

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

A dismissal shall be any involuntary separation of employment that does not fall into one of the other categories of separation. Bosque County is an "at-will" employer and a supervisor may dismiss an employee at any time for any legal reason or no reason, with or without notice. The supervisor is required to submit notice to the Human Resources Department within 48 hours of any dismissal of an employee.

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

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

E -16 RETIREE / REHIRES

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

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

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

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

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

E-17 POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Employees of Bosque County shall have the right to support candidates of their choice and to engage in political activity during their personal time.

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

E-18 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Employees of Bosque County shall not engage in any employment, relationship, or activity which employee's job efficiency, or which would reduce their ability to make objective decisions in regard to their work and responsibility as a Bosque County employee.

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

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

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

E-19 WHISTLEBLOWER

An employee may, in good faith, report an alleged violation of a Bosque County Policy or federal or state law to their supervisor, department head, 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 may report the allegation to the District Attorney or the County Attorney. The county will investigate the reported activity.

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

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

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

An employee with a question regarding this policy should contact the Human Resources Department.

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