

City of Fort Worth Human Resources Department

SUBJECT: Mental Health Leave Policy – Police Department

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Immediate

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Per Amended H.B. 1486
(Gov't Code Section 614.15)

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Annual Review

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Approved by Human Resources Director:

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Holly Moyer, Interim HR Director (May 9, 2025 08:26 CDT)

Mental Health Leave Policy – Police Department

I. Purpose and Introduction

This policy serves to comply with Tex. Gov't Code §614.015.

Leave under this section is only available to sworn peace officers, including police officers and marshals, and full-time telecommunicators employed by the City.

II. Definitions

- a. Traumatic event – an event that a peace officer or telecommunicator responds to, is involved in, or witnesses, as a result of his or her employment, the nature of which is likely to cause a strong emotional reaction or mental distress that may temporarily interfere with the officer's or telecommunicator's ability to function.

Traumatic events for the purpose of this policy are limited to the following six events:

1. A fire, flood, earthquake, wind, storm, wave action, explosion, riot, or hostile military or paramilitary action that causes a mass casualty incident and requires an emergency response;
 2. Shootings or traffic accidents that result in a mass casualty incident;
 3. Line-of-duty death of another officer or an act of violence that causes an officer to sustain serious bodily injury;
 4. Death of a child resulting from violence or neglect;
 5. Use of force incidents that result in death or serious bodily injury; or
 6. Being held hostage.
- b. Mass Casualty Incident- an event that overwhelms the local healthcare system, where the number of casualties vastly exceeds the local resources and capabilities in a short period of time.



- c. Mental Health Leave – paid leave for peace officers or telecommunicators who experience a traumatic event, as defined above.
- d. Mental Health Professional – a licensed social or mental health worker, counselor, psychotherapist, psychologist or psychiatrist.
- e. Traumatic Event Coordinator (TEC) is an employee appointed by the department head who serves as the liaison between the officer or telecommunicator and the department following a traumatic event. The TEC is responsible for notifying the officer's or telecommunicator's supervisor that mental health leave will be taken. The purpose of the Traumatic Event Coordinator is to provide the affected officer or telecommunicator with assistance/guidance through this process as well as assist the officer or telecommunicator in processing the event overall.

III. Eligibility and Duration of Mental Health Leave

A peace officer or telecommunicator who experiences a traumatic event as defined above while on duty and in the scope of the officer's or telecommunicator's employment, will automatically be placed on paid mental health leave for a period of **three days** for each traumatic event. The leave shall commence on the first regularly scheduled workday following the traumatic event and be applied to the following consecutive workdays.

Leave under this policy shall be paid at the officer's or telecommunicator's regular base rate of pay and does not count towards overtime eligibility or as time worked.

Leave under this policy shall not be deducted from the officer's or telecommunicator's vacation, sick, or other leave balances.

IV. Extension of Mental Health Leave

Mental Health Leave may be extended by an additional two days, for a total of five days, if the conditions described in the following subsection (V(f)) are satisfied. Only one extension per traumatic event is permitted under this policy.

V. Procedures following a Traumatic Event

- a. An officer or telecommunicator who is exposed to a Traumatic Event should contact the TEC within 24 hours of the Traumatic Event ending. The TEC shall make all further notifications, including to the officer's or telecommunicator's supervisor, regarding the officer's or telecommunicator's exposure to a Traumatic Event and use of leave under this policy. Officers or telecommunicators may request that the TEC contact another member of the department's Peer Support Team to be the officer's or telecommunicator's liaison for a particular event.



- b. The TEC will ensure that the appropriate departmental process for reporting and documenting an officer's or telecommunicator's exposure to a Traumatic Event is followed. The officer or telecommunicator may have a brief check-in with the TEC each day during leave taken under this policy.
- c. At the conclusion of the mandatory three-day Mental Health Leave, the officer or telecommunicator may be directed by the TEC or liaison to attend a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) hosted by the Peer Support Team. The purpose of the CISD is to address, reduce and mitigate the stress that may be associated with exposure to a Traumatic Event. *Note:* The CISD should take place only after Major Case has completed their initial interviews (if needed) so as not to taint any witness accounts of the incident. The TEC will be onsite for the CISD but will only attend the briefing at the request of the Peer Support Coordinator and the affected officer(s) or telecommunicator(s).
- d. At either the conclusion of the Mental Health Leave or immediately following the CISD, the TEC will meet with the affected officer or telecommunicator to ensure the officer or telecommunicator has contacted the EAP Manager to schedule an appointment with a mental health professional as soon as possible. An officer or telecommunicator may not return to full duty until the appointment has been attended and will serve in a restricted capacity until the appointment has been attended.
- e. If an employee obtains mental wellness assistance on their own outside of this process, the employee will be required to provide documentation/medical release from the provider stating the date, time, and name of the professional who was seen to the Medical Records Custodian.
- f. If the officer or telecommunicator attends the CISD and schedules an appointment with a mental health professional, the officer's or telecommunicator's Mental Health Leave will be extended by **two additional working days** to attend CISD and the appointment. The two-day extension does not need to be taken consecutively with the initial three days of Mental Health Leave.
- g. The TEC shall ensure that an Injury Report (DWC-1) form is completed as soon as practical following the Traumatic Event and that the form is submitted to the department's Medical Records Custodian for further processing.

VI. Disclosure of Mental Health Leave usage

Use of a Mental Health Leave shall be handled in accordance with City policies regarding managing medical information and, generally, shall not be disclosed other than for legitimate business or safety reasons, or as otherwise required by State law.



VII. Notice to Employees

The City reserves the right to modify the program, as appropriate. Any future modifications shall not eliminate the possibility for Mental Health Leave to be available for peace officers or full-time telecommunicators who experience a qualifying event, but may change eligibility, duration, and other terms and processes contained herein.