

714 – Paid Mental Health Leave for Peace Officers

Section 714.01 Purpose	The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance regarding the use of mental health leave for persons employed by Fort Bend County as peace officers. Chapter 614.015 of the Texas Government Code requires Fort Bend to provide paid leave to peace officers who experience a traumatic event while on duty for the County.
Section 714.02 Applicability	This policy applies to licensed peace officers employed by Fort Bend County, as defined by Article 2.12, Code of Criminal Procedure.
Section 714.03 Conditions	A peace officer shall be allowed a reasonable period of leave if requested due to the result of a traumatic event that occurred while on duty. Approval for leave will be determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with guidelines adopted by each County elected official or department head who employs peace officers. The leave must be approved by the employee's department head/elected official, and generally should not exceed 3 days. Additional paid leave may be granted if supported by a document from a health care provider. Leave will run concurrently with FMLA if it meets qualifications under the Family Medical Leave Act. <i>See Policy 704 – Family Medical Leave Act in 1993.</i>
Section 714.04 Anonymity	Fort Bend County will keep requests to take mental health leave and any medical information related to mental health leave under this policy confidential to the extent allowed by law. All medical information will be kept separate from the employee's general personnel file.
Section 714.05 Effect on Paid Leave Balances	Fort Bend County will not reduce an eligible employee's sick leave, vacation leave, holiday, or other paid leave balance for mental health leave taken under this policy.
Section 714.06 Resources	Listed below are a few mental health resources for first responders. We encourage all employees to take advantage of these resources when in need! • Employee Assistance Program (EAP) – Deer Oaks 24/7/365 Call: 1-866-327-2400, www.deeroakseap.com • FBCSO Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team fbsocism@fortbendcountytexas.gov • FBCSO Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) 281-341-8530/8533; https://www.fortbendcountytexas.gov/government/departments/administration-of-justice/sheriff-s-office/bureaus-divisions/emergency-operations-communications-division/crisis-intervention-team-cit • Cypress Creek Honor Strong Program https://www.cypresscreekhospital.com/behavioral-health-programs/honor-strong-program/ • The Wounded Blue Peer Support Program https://thewoundedblue.org/programs/ • Chrysalis Counseling Joanne Ketch https://joanneketch.com/first-responder/

Policy Approved and Adopted By:
Fort Bend County Commissioners Court
September 28, 2021