

## FORT BEND COUNTY EMPLOYEE INFORMATION MANUAL

## 714 – Paid Mental Health Leave for First Responders

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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 first responders. Chapter 614.015 of the Texas Government Code requires Fort Bend to provide paid leave to first responders who experience a traumatic event while on duty for the County and the County desires to extend that coverage to all First Responders employed by 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, telecommunication as defined in Texas Occupations Code Chapter 1701.405, employees of the County Fire Marshal's Office, employees of Fort Bend County Haz-Mat and employees of Fort Bend County Emergency Medical Services.
Section 714.03 Conditions	A first responder shall be allowed a period of leave if requested due to the result of a traumatic event or an accumulation of traumatic events 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 first responders. The leave must be approved by the employee's department head/elected official, and generally should not exceed 3 shifts. Additional paid leave may be granted if supported by a document from a physical or behavioral 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	<p>First Responder Wellness resources can be found at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="https://www.fortbendcountytexas.gov/government/departments/behavioral-health-services/first-responder-wellness">https://www.fortbendcountytexas.gov/government/departments/behavioral-health-services/first-responder-wellness</a>.</li> <li>● <a href="https://www.fortbendcountytexas.gov/first-responder-wellness-coping-strategies">https://www.fortbendcountytexas.gov/first-responder-wellness-coping-strategies</a></li> <li>● <a href="https://www.fortbendcountytexas.gov/government/departments/behavioral-health-services/first-responder-wellness/first-responder-wellness-resources">https://www.fortbendcountytexas.gov/government/departments/behavioral-health-services/first-responder-wellness/first-responder-wellness-resources</a>.</li> <li>● <a href="https://www.fortbendcountytexas.gov/government/departments/behavioral-health-services/first-responder-wellness/finding-wellness-building-healthier-life-tcole-4202-handouts">https://www.fortbendcountytexas.gov/government/departments/behavioral-health-services/first-responder-wellness/finding-wellness-building-healthier-life-tcole-4202-handouts</a></li> </ul>

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Policy Approved and Adopted By:  
Fort Bend County Commissioners Court  
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