

Section 8

Leave and Absences

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Section 8-01
Annual Leave
(Updated April 2026)

8-01.1 Eligibility

All state employees must have six months of continuous state employment to be eligible to use accrued annual leave.

8-01.2 Requesting Leave

Employees must request and receive approval from their supervisor before taking leave, including but not limited to annual, compensatory, holiday, or special leave. Employees may request leave via email, the Employee Portal, or by another documented manner determined by their immediate supervisor. If an employee takes leave time before it is approved, it may be considered an unauthorized absence.

8-01.3 Break in Service During the First Six Months

If an employee is in an unpaid status for a full calendar month, the month will not count toward fulfilling the six-month continuous service requirement. The month of unpaid status will not cause the employee's continuous months of state service calculation to reset.

8-01.4 Leave Accrual and Carry Over

Annual leave accruals begin on the first day of employment and terminate on the last day of duty. An employee must physically work during a month to receive accruals for that month. Credit for one month's annual leave is given for each month or fraction of a month of state employment and is posted on the first working day of employment and on the first working day of each succeeding month thereafter.

If an employee is on any type of paid or unpaid leave that extends into the following month, the accrual will not be posted until the employee returns to duty. If an employee does not return to duty, he or she forfeits this accrual. Part-time employees are eligible for paid annual leave, however, accruals are proportionate to their full-time equivalency (FTE).

If the employee is transferring directly to another state agency or institution of higher education, the accrued and unused leave (annual and sick leave) is transferred to the receiving agency (See 8-01.6).

Annual leave accruals for full-time employees are:

Length of Service	Hours Accrued Per Month	Allowable Carryover/ September 1st
0 but less than 2 years	8	180
2 but less than 5 years	9	244
5 but less than 10 years	10	268
10 but less than 15 years	11	292
15 but less than 20 years	13	340
20 but less than 25 years	15	388
25 but less than 30 years	17	436
30 but less than 35 years	19	484
35 years or more	21	532

If an employee's total annual leave balance exceeds the limits set in the preceding table for a particular fiscal year, the excess will be converted to sick leave on the first day of the next fiscal year (September 1).

8-01.5 Holidays

Accrued annual leave should not be charged against any state holiday, even if it falls during a time when an employee is on scheduled leave. This also includes any employee exhausting accrued leave at the time of termination.

8-01.6 Prior State Service Verification

When an employee transfers from one state agency to another with or without a break in service, the receiving agency should request a verification of dates of service and/or unused leave to be transferred from the terminating agency. The receiving agency will then set the annual leave accrual rate according to the verified total months of service. If the transfer is effective on the first day of the month, the receiving agency will give the annual leave accrual beginning that month. Human Resources is responsible for completing the verification process.

8-01.7 Annual Leave Accruals Upon Separation

An employee who separates from state employment is entitled to be paid for accrued and unused annual leave, as long as the employee has had continuous employment for at least six months and the employee has not been reemployed by another state agency within 30 days of such separation.

Unused annual leave hours remaining at the end of the month of separation will be processed as a lump sum payment, 30 days after the employee has been removed from payroll. Employees have the option of depositing their lump sum payment into a Texa\$aver 401(k) or 457 Plan account in lieu of direct payment (See 8-01.9).

8-01.8 Estate

The estate of a deceased employee is entitled to payment of the employee's accumulated and unused annual leave.

8-01.9 Lump Sum Annual Leave Payments into Deferred Savings Account

IRS regulations allow employees who separate from state employment the option to defer their unused annual leave lump sum payment and have it deposited into a TexaSaver 401(k) or 457 Plan account. Lump sum payments of annual leave to the TexaSaver 401(k) or 457 accounts are made on a tax deferred basis. However, Social Security and Medicare taxes will be deducted from the lump sum payments.

Separating employees may choose to deposit their entire lump sum or deposit a partial amount and receive the remaining balance. Employees must have an established TexaSaver account or establish a new account (before the last day on payroll) for deposit of the lump sum deferred annual leave payment, and all such decisions must be finalized by the separation date. Any deposits of lump sum payments into a TexaSaver account must be completed within two and one-half months after separation. Maximum annual deferral limits apply as established by the IRS.

Section 8-02
Sick Leave
(Updated April 2026)

8-02.1 Criteria for Use of Sick Leave

Sick leave allows for a paid absence from work under certain conditions. There is no waiting period for use of accrued sick leave.

Sick leave with pay may be taken when an employee is prevented from performing duties because of sickness, injury, or pregnancy and confinement. Sick leave may also be taken if an employee needs to care for a member of his or her immediate family who is ill. Immediate family includes those individuals related by kinship, adoption, or marriage who live in the same household; foster children certified by the Texas Department Family and Protective Services who reside in the same household as the employee; and minor children of the employee regardless of whether the children live in the same household.

Sick leave may be used for the following purposes:

- the employee is ill, temporarily disabled, or pregnancy and confinement prevent the employee's performance of duty;
- a member of the employee's immediate family needs the employee's personal care or assistance because of illness; or
- the employee or a member of the employee's immediate family has a medical appointment.

Sick leave may also be taken for a spouse, child, or parent of the employee who does not reside in the same household. Under this provision, sick leave is limited to only the time necessary to provide care and assistance as a direct result of a documented medical condition.

Using sick leave for a parent-in-law is only permissible if the parent-in-law resides in the employee's household.

If an employee is on leave and would otherwise be entitled to sick leave, then the fact that such sick leave is requested while on vacation leave does not affect the employee's entitlement to sick leave and the employee may use sick leave for the applicable hours required.

8-02.2 Employee Responsibility

An employee who is absent from duty because of sickness, injury, or pregnancy and confinement must notify his or her supervisor at the earliest practical time. If out more than one day, the employee should notify the supervisor of his or her status each morning unless other arrangements are made (e.g., an employee who plans to return on a specific date). An employee on leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) must comply with the provisions outlined in Family and Medical Leave.

The employee must leave a phone number where he or she can be reached during the period of illness. An employee who cannot be reached must provide an adequate explanation of his or her whereabouts during the period of absence.

To be eligible for accumulated sick leave with pay for a continuous period of more than three working days, an employee must send to Human Resources a doctor's certification, or a written statement of facts acceptable to the supervisor, documenting the nature of the illness. If an illness results in the absence of three working days or less, the Supervisor has the discretion to require documentation of the illness.

When an employee is able to plan for or schedule sick leave, they must obtain supervisor approval. Employees may request leave via email, the Employee Portal, or by another documented manner determined by their immediate supervisor.

8-02.3 Sick Leave Accrual

An employee accrues sick leave from the first day of employment through the last day of duty. As set by the Texas Legislature, the amount of time an employee accrues on the first day of each month is eight hours (based on full-time employment). There is no limit on the amount of time that can be carried forward into the next fiscal year. Part-time employees accrue sick leave at a rate proportional to full-time status.

An employee who is on leave the first day of the month may not use that month's accrual until they return to duty.

There is no authority to pay out an employee's accrued unused sick leave balance upon termination.

8-02.4 Estate

The estate of a deceased employee is entitled to receive payment for one-half of the employee's sick leave balance or 336 hours, whichever is less. The amount paid to the estate will be based on the state employee's compensation rate at the time of the employee's death. Longevity is not included in the compensation.

8-02.5 Holidays

Accrued sick leave should not be charged against any state holiday, even if it falls during a time period an employee is on sick leave.

8-02.6 Transfer of Sick Leave Time

An employee's accrued sick leave balance will be transferred when an employee moves from employment in one state agency to another, provided the employment in the receiving agency occurs within 12 months of the separation date. The receiving agency will request that any unused sick leave be transferred from the employee's previous agency. If the transfer is effective on the first day of the month, the agencies will coordinate to ensure that the proper accrual is credited to the employee's balance.

Under certain conditions, an employee who is restored to state employment following military service is entitled to have his or her sick leave balance restored for the period of the employee's military leave absence.

8-02.7 Retirement

An employee who retires based on service or a disability is entitled to apply unused sick leave to increase the retirement annuity and, in some cases, depending on hire date, to increase service credit to reach retirement eligibility. The employee is entitled to a credit for accrued sick leave only when employed during the month that includes the effective date of the employee's retirement.

Sick leave is creditable in the retirement system at the rate of one month of service credit for each 20 days, or 160 hours, and for each fraction thereof beyond 160 hours, of accumulated unused sick leave. Retiring employees may donate all or part of their sick leave balance to the Department's sick leave pool before the Department certifies any remaining hours to be used for service credit. A retiring employee may not store, or bank accumulated sick leave for use after retirement if they return to work with the State.

8-02.8 Educational Activities Leave

An employee may use up to eight hours of sick leave each fiscal year to attend educational activities for the employee's children who are in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. This total (8 hours) is per fiscal year and not per child. Employees must give reasonable notice of their intention to use this leave.

Educational activities are school-sponsored activities, including parent-teacher conferences, tutoring, volunteer programs, field trips, classroom programs, school committee meetings, academic competitions and athletic, music or theater programs.

Section 8-03
Sick Leave Pool and Family Leave Pool Sick Leave Donation
(Updated April 2026)

8-03.1 Administration

The Department has established procedures for donation and use of Sick Leave Pool and Family Leave Pool in accordance with Texas Government Code §661.002.

Human Resources will certify an employee's eligibility for withdrawing time from the pool based on the criteria outlined by this policy. The amount of time that is available in the Pool and the exact amount of time an eligible employee may draw from the Pool will also be determined.

The Commissioner or their designee acts as the sick leave and family leave pool administrator.

8-03.2 Definitions

Serious Health Condition - For the purpose of **family leave pool**, a serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves: (a) inpatient care, such as an overnight stay in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility, including any period of incapacitation or any subsequent treatment in connection with such inpatient care; or (b) continuing treatment by a health care provider. Incapacity means inability to work, attend school, or perform other regular daily activities, due to serious illness, treatment, or recovery. Treatment by a health care provider includes: (a) treatment by a nurse or physician's assistant under direct supervision of a health care provider, or by a provider of health care services; for example, a physical therapist under orders of or on referral by a health care provider; and (b) examinations to determine if a serious illness exists and evaluations of the illness.

Catastrophic Illness or Injury – For the purpose of **sick leave pool**, a catastrophic illness or injury is defined as a severe condition or combination of conditions affecting the mental or physical health of the employee or the employee's immediate family member that requires the services of a licensed practitioner for a prolonged period of time (generally considered to be a period greater than thirty calendar days from the onset of the catastrophic injury/illness) and that forces the employee to exhaust all leave time and to lose compensation from the state. As defined in the Texas Insurance Code, a licensed practitioner is someone who is practicing within the scope of his or her license

The Department has further defined “catastrophic injury or illness” as a medically verified severe condition or combination of conditions caused by life-threatening injury or illness or a medically verified debilitating injury or illness of an extreme magnitude.

Examples of illness/injuries generally considered severe enough to be catastrophic include but are not limited to:

- Stroke with residual paralysis or weakness
- Severe heart attack
- Severe head trauma or major concussion
- Major surgery such as open-heart surgery
- Cancer-related surgery or treatments

- Amputations

The Department does not consider certain incapacitating disabilities (with minor or no complications) to be severe enough to be categorized as catastrophic. Examples of illnesses/injuries not considered catastrophic include but are not limited to:

- Broken limb
- Cold/allergy
- Back injuries
- Childbirth
- Whiplash
- Sprains
- Tendonitis
- Carpal tunnel syndrome

Immediate Family – Texas Government Code §661.202 defines immediate family as:

- An individual who resides in the same household as the employee and is related to the employee by kinship, adoption, or marriage. If not living in the same household, the employee’s use of sick leave is strictly limited to the time necessary to provide care and assistance as a direct result of a documented medical condition.
- A foster child of an employee who resides in the same household as the employee and who is under the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services.
- A minor child of the employee, regardless of whether the child lives in the same household.

Medical Emergency - Internal Revenue Service Rev. Rul. 90-29 defines a “medical emergency” as a medical condition of the employee or a family member that will require the prolonged absence from duty of the employee (40 hours), including intermittent absences that are related to the same illness or condition, and will result in a substantial loss of income. Medical emergency is considered in the employer sponsored leave sharing program taxation requirements.

8-03.3 Sick Leave Pool and Family Leave Pool Program Summary

Pool Leave Type	Sick Leave Pool	Family Leave Pool
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee has exhausted all applicable accrued leave. • Exception: employees who are off work due to an on-the-job injury or illness are not required to exhaust their annual or compensatory leave. • Five years state service including one full year with the Department. • Employee intends to return to employment with the department following use of time from the pool. • Employee currently meets job performance standards and is not under a disciplinary action or performance improvement plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee has exhausted all compensatory, sick, and annual leave or any applicable Sick Leave Pool hours. • Five years state service including one full year with the Department. • Employee intends to return to employment with the department following use of time from the pool. • Employee currently meets job performance standards and is not under a disciplinary action or performance improvement plan.

Duration of Absence	Continuous or intermittent	Continuous or intermittent
Requesting Pool Hours	Before the hours are needed and at least five working days prior to the effective date of the leave.	Before the hours are needed and at least five working days prior to the effective date of the leave.
<i>Reasons for Request - Medical Related</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee suffers a catastrophic illness or injury for which the employee is or has been under a licensed practitioner's care for a prolonged period Employee's immediate family member suffers a catastrophic illness or injury and is under a licensed practitioner's care for a prolonged period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A serious illness of an employee, including pandemic-related illness. A serious illness to an immediate family member, including pandemic-related illness.
<i>Reasons for Request</i>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The birth of a child. Bonding time within the first year after the child's birth. Adoption of child younger than 3 years of age. Placement of a foster child or adoption of a child under 18 years of age. Placement of any person 18 years of age or older requiring guardianship. An extenuating circumstance created by an ongoing pandemic, including providing essential care to a family member.
<i>Reason Related to Previous Pool Donation</i>	Previous donation to the pool within the fiscal year	Previous donation to the pool within the fiscal year
<i>Documentation for Request</i>	Request Form	Request Form
<i>Medical Reason</i>	Certification of Health Care Provider for Catastrophic Health Condition	Certification of Health Care Provider for Serious Health Condition
<i>Dependent Confirmation to Care for Child</i>	N/A	A birth certificate, birth facts, or adoption or foster paperwork for a child under 18 years of age where employee is listed as a parent.
<i>Dependent Confirmation for Guardianship</i>	N/A	A document that employee is the guardian of a person who is 18 years of age or older and requires Guardianship.
<i>Extenuating Circumstance</i>	N/A	Proof of essential caregiver designation, proof of closure of a school or daycare.

8.03-4 Pool Leave Guidelines

- Employees must have completed at least five years of state service including one full year with the Department.
- Employees intend to return to employment with the Department following the use of time from the Pool.
- Employees must be currently meeting job performance standards and not be under a performance improvement plan or disciplinary action.
- Employees are not required to contribute to the Pool before they can use Pool leave.
- Employees who use Pool leave are not required to reimburse the Pool.
- The lifetime maximum amount of Pool time that can be granted to an employee is the lesser of 720 hours or 1/3 of the Pool balance. A part-time employee is granted Pool leave on a pro rata basis.

Number of Hours that can be Withdrawn		
<i>Tenure</i>	<i>Sick Leave Pool</i>	<i>Family Leave Pool</i>
<p>Five to ten years of state service</p> <p>Part time employees receive leave at a proportional rate</p>	<p>Lesser of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/3 of the Pool balance or • 400 hours minus any previously used Department Pool hours or • employees highest accumulated balance of sick leave during the past 24 months while employed by the state 	<p>Lesser of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/3 of the Pool balance <u>or</u> • 400 hours minus any previously used Department Pool hours <u>or</u> • employees highest accumulated balance of sick and annual vacation leave during the past 24 months while employed by the state.
<p>Ten years or more of state service</p> <p>Part time employees receive leave at a proportional rate</p>	<p>Lesser of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/3 of the Pool balance <u>or</u> • 720 hours minus any previously used Department pool hours <u>or</u> • employees highest accumulated balance of sick leave during the past 24 months (10-20 years) <u>or</u> • past 36 months (20 years or more) while employed by the state 	<p>Lesser of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/3 of the Pool balance <u>or</u> • 720 hours minus any previously used Department pool hours <u>or</u> • employees highest accumulated balance of Sick and annual vacation leave during the past 24 months (10-20 years) <u>or</u> • past 36 months (20 years or more) while employed by the state

When two or more employees within the Department have a common family member for whom pool leave is requested, only one of the employees will be awarded leave from the Pool to care for that family member. Concurrent or consecutive requests from two or more employees to care for the same family member will not be accepted.

The employee may reapply for additional Pool leave if the amount previously granted is insufficient to cover the employee's absence provided the maximum amount allowable has not already been granted. Subsequent requests must be accompanied by a physician's statement which clearly indicates the amount of time needed exceeds the original amount granted.

Employees will only be granted pool leave from one pool for the same illness or injury.

All requests and recommendations for Pool leave will be approved or disapproved by the Commissioner. Human Resources will notify the employee whether the request has been approved or denied within seven days of receipt of the complete request package that includes required documentation.

8-03.5 Donations of Leave to the Pool

Donation		
Pool Leave Type	Sick Leave Pool	Family Leave Pool
<i>Donation</i>	Accrued sick leave	Accrued sick or annual vacation leave
<i>Kind of Donation</i>	Voluntary	Voluntary
<i>Donation Increment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current and separating employees 8-hour increments. • Retiring employees any increment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current and separating employees 8-hour increments • Retiring employees any increment
<i>Donation Period</i>	At any time during the fiscal year and upon termination or retirement	At any time during the fiscal year and upon termination or retirement
<i>Taxable Donation</i>	Donation is non-taxable	Donation is taxable

- Contributions of leave from active and separating employees must be in increments of eight hours, except for retiring employees who can contribute any unused balance. The Pool will be credited with the amount of time contributed by that employee and a corresponding amount of time will be deducted from the amount to which that employee is entitled as if the employee had used the time for personal purposes.
- Employees who contribute to the Pool may not stipulate that their donations be used only by a particular person.
- Employees who donate leave cannot later request reinstatement of donated sick leave hours (other than as described above).
- Employees must have more than thirty (30) hours of accrued and unused leave before they may contribute to sick leave or family leave pools.
- Employees who contribute leave hours to the either Pool and then exhaust their leave balance in the same fiscal year may have the same number of hours they contributed to the Pool that fiscal year returned to them.

Employees separating from state employment are encouraged to donate to the sick leave pool or family leave pool. Employees wishing to donate leave must do so by completing the [Sick Leave Pool/Family Leave Donation Form](#) and submitting to Human Resources for processing. Human

Resources will then deduct the contributed time from the donating employee's sick leave balance in the Centralized Accounting and Payroll/Personnel System (CAPPS) and add the donated time to the applicable pool.

8-03.6 Tax Considerations for Family Leave Pool Donors

Pursuant to Internal Revenue Service Revenue Ruling 90-29, any donation not qualified under Internal Revenue Service guidelines as a medical emergency will have the cash value of hours included in gross income of the donor and will be treated as wages for employment tax purposes. Such wages will be considered a lump-sum payment and subject to up to 25% income tax, Medicare, and applicable social security withholdings. Individuals who wish to donate to the family leave pool and through direct donation to another employee are encouraged to consult a tax advisor. Human Resources determines if the recipient employee meets the medical emergency threshold based on submitted medical documentation.

8-03.7 Documentation

Each withdrawal request related to a health condition must be accompanied by a physician's statement which contains: the beginning date of the physical or mental condition; a description of the illness or injury; the prognosis for recovery; and the anticipated date the employee will be able to return to work. If the request is to care for an immediate family member, the physician's statement must contain the length of time the employee is required to assist the family member.

If an employee is seeking permission to withdraw time from the family leave pool because of an extenuating circumstance created by an ongoing pandemic, including providing essential care to a family member, the employee must provide any applicable documentation, including an essential caregiver designation, proof of closure of a school or daycare, or other appropriate documentation.

Documentation of birth, adoptions, placement through foster care, proof of guardianship, closure of care facilities, and other relevant documents that establish the relationship to the employee, is required for family leave pool requests.

8-03.8 Timekeeping

It is the responsibility of employees to notify their supervisor and Human Resources when they plan to return to work. Employees on Pool Leave for a full calendar month accrue paid leave for that month, provided they return to work following the leave. Employees will not be removed from Pool Leave to exhaust these accruals.

Holidays that occur during the use of Pool time are counted just like regular sick leave; if a person is sick on a holiday, the person receives "holiday pay" for that day, not "sick leave pay."

Human Resources will keep records of all donations to the Pool and all hours provided to an employee and will maintain the Pool leave accounts. Upon an employee's return to work, any unused leave will be returned to the sick leave pool.

8-03.9 Estate

The estate of a deceased employee is not entitled to payment for unused Pool leave or directly donate sick leave. Any unused balance of Pool leave granted to an employee returns to the Pool.

8-03.10 Retirement

Retiring employees will not be credited with sick or annual leave hours previously donated to the Pool or directly to another Department employee. Pool leave granted and donated sick leave are not eligible for consideration towards retirement.

Section 8-04
Donor Sick Leave
(Updated April 2026)

8-04.1 Overview

An employee may donate any amount of the employee's accrued sick leave to another Department employee who has exhausted the employee's sick leave, including any time used from the Sick Leave or Family Leave Pools. The policies governing donations of sick leave hours to a named employee are:

An employee who donates individual sick leave:

- must only donate on a voluntary basis;
- donate to an employee at the same agency;
- shall not receive remuneration or a gift in exchange for a sick leave donation; and
- may not have the leave reinstated to their own account.

An employee who receives donated sick leave:

- shall not provide remuneration or a gift in exchange for a donation of sick leave;
- must use donated sick leave only as provided by Texas Government Code § 661.202(d) and (e).;
- shall not receive service credit in the Employees Retirement System of Texas for any time donated to the employee that is unused on the last day of the employee's employment;
- shall not take donated sick leave with them if they transfer to another state agency or have the hours reinstated if they return to the Department at a later date;
- shall not be paid out for donated hours if they separate from employment or as part of their estate;
- will not receive notice from the Department of the identity of the donor; and
- may refuse a donation.

Because the donation of sick leave hours must be voluntarily, solicitation of donations is strongly discouraged. Solicitation of sick leave time under Section 8-04, including solicitation on behalf of others, that is disruptive to the workplace is unacceptable and may lead to corrective or disciplinary action. Unacceptable solicitation includes contacts that exert pressure, or leave a feeling of guilt or lack of compassion for not donating. Personal health information will not be divulged in the process of donation or acceptance of sick leave between individuals.

Recipients of donated sick leave are required to provide medical documentation of illness or injury to comply with the policy.

8-04.2 Eligibility for Donor Sick Leave

In order to be eligible to receive or donate sick leave, the following rules apply:

- An employee may receive directly donated sick leave if they are employed at the same time as the donor,
- They have exhausted all their own accrued leave,

- They have exhausted all Sick Leave Pool and Family Leave Pool hours received or eligible to receive,
- They have exhausted any previously donated hours.

8-04.3 Administration

To donate sick leave to an individual Department employee, a current employee must submit the [Sick Leave Direct Donation – Donor Form](#) to Human Resources. Donations may be made in any increment of hours. Upon receipt of the donor form, Human Resources shall notify the receiving employee that a donation has been offered. To accept the donation, the recipient must complete the [Sick Leave Direct Donation – Recipient Form](#) and submit to Human Resources. If all requirements for the donation are met, Human Resources shall deduct the donated amount from the donating employee's sick leave balance in CAPPs and credit that amount to the recipient's sick leave balance in CAPPs.

The recipient may only use this leave for sick leave purposes, as defined by the Texas Government Code § 661.202 (d) and (e), and as described in Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual Section 8-02, that occurs at the time of or after the donor employee submits the request to donate form to Human Resources. Donated sick leave may not be used retroactively for leave that occurred prior to the donation.

Additionally, donations can only be made to eligible employees. A separating employee may not donate sick leave to an individual who does not qualify to use the leave (has a balance of sick leave or has not met all the eligibility requirements) at the time of the donation, for use in the future.

Section 8-05
Extended Sick Leave
 (Updated April 2026)

8-05.1 Overview

Under extenuating circumstances, the Commissioner or designee may grant, on an individual basis, extended paid sick leave hours to an employee who has a serious health condition or the employee's immediate family member, as defined in Section 8-03, requires care or the services of licensed health care practitioner for a prolonged period of time.

8-05.2 Eligibility

To be eligible for extended sick leave, an employee must meet the following criteria:

- Be a current employee with the agency for at least 12 months;
- Indicated an intention and the ability to return to work;
- Provided the Department with a written statement and/or recertification from their physician regarding the nature of the illness and estimated date of return to duty;
- Has not exhibited a pattern of using sick leave in an unacceptable manner;
- Not been granted extended sick leave prior;
- Has exhausted all leave because of their own serious health condition or that of an immediate family member as defined in section 8-03.2;
- Consistently met their job performance standards (job specific competencies);
- Have a current satisfactory annual performance evaluation on file;
- Has not received any formal disciplinary action within the previous 12 months.

8-05.3 Requesting Extended Sick Leave

An employee may request extended sick leave hours by submitting a formal written request to the Commissioner. The employee must have exhausted all accrued leave, including any pool leave or donated sick leave hours, prior to an award of extended sick leave.

The Commissioner will make a determination based on the extenuating circumstances .

8-05.4 Number of Hours Granted

If approved to receive extended sick leave, the amount of leave an employee may receive depends on the employee's length of service with the Department. The maximum allowable hours is 160 hours. Effective April 2026, the following table illustrates the length of service and the maximum allowable hours that could be granted.

Length of Service	Maximum Allowable to Request
1 year but less than 2 years	40 hours
2 years but less than 5 years	80 hours
5 or more years	160 hours

An eligible employee can be granted hours up to the amount shown above but may be granted less if the duration of the serious health condition is less than the total number of hours an employee can receive.

Any time granted but not used is returned to the Department.

Section 8-06
Family and Medical Leave
(Updated April 2026)

8-06.1 Purpose

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), entitles eligible employees to twelve weeks of job-protected leave during any 12-month period for the following reasons:

- The birth and subsequent care of a newborn child;
- The placement of a child for adoption or foster care;
- The need to care for a spouse, child or parent with a serious health condition;
- A serious health condition which makes the employee unable to perform the functions of his or her job; or
- A qualifying exigency arises out of the fact that the employees' spouse, child or parent is a covered military member on active duty (or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty) in support of a contingency operation.

In addition, eligible employees may take job-protected, unpaid or paid leave for up to 26 workweeks in a single, 12-month period to care for a covered service member with a serious illness or injury.

An employee on FMLA leave is also entitled to have health benefits maintained while on leave as if the employee had continued to work.

8-06.2 Eligibility

Employees who have been employed with the State for at least 12 months and who have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period immediately preceding the start of the leave may be eligible for FML. Eligible employees are entitled to 12 weeks of FML leave during a rolling 12-month period beginning with the date an employee's FMLA leave begins. This rolling 12-month period is measured backward from the date on which an employee uses any FMLA leave and changes daily.

A single 12-month period associated with Military Caregiver Leave begins on the first day that the eligible employee takes family and medical leave to care for a covered service member and ends 12 months after that date.

FMLA leave is available for the following situations:

- *Birth of a child or placement of an adopted or foster child.*
Both parents may take leave for the birth of a child or after placement as adoptive or foster parents. The leave must be taken before the end of the first 12 months following the date of birth or placement.
- *Serious health condition of the employee or the employee's spouse, child, or parent.*
A serious health condition is defined as an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either inpatient care or continue treatment by a health care provider. Both physical and mental health conditions qualify under FMLA.

- *Military family leave entitlements.*
See Section 8-06.4 for details.

8-06.3 Guidelines

Eligible employees must use all available and applicable paid sick leave, annual leave, overtime, and compensatory time while taking family and medical leave. This is not applicable to an employee who is receiving temporary disability benefits or workers' compensation benefits and is not required to use certain paid leave while receiving those benefits. Once the accrued leave is exhausted, the employee may apply for Sick Leave Pool or Family Leave Pool, if they are qualified, before entering into a leave without pay status.

An employee on FML leave is not entitled to accrue state service credit or annual vacation or sick leave for any full calendar months of leave without pay. Further, any full calendar months of leave without pay are not included in the calculation of the minimum number of continuous months of employment under the merit increase provisions and the employee annual vacation and leave provisions in Texas Government Code, Sections 659.255 and 661.152.

If an employee uses paid leave under circumstances which do not qualify as FMLA leave, the leave will not count against the 12 weeks of FMLA leave to which the employee is entitled. For example, paid sick leave used for a medical condition which is not a serious health condition does not count against the 12 weeks of FMLA leave entitlement.

Holidays

Federal regulations provide guidance concerning holidays occurring while an employee is on FML leave. If an employee takes FMLA leave in one continuous block and a holiday or closing occurs during the employee's time off, the holiday or closing will count as part of the employee's FML leave entitlement hours. Holidays, inclement weather days, shutdowns, etc., do not count against the FMLA leave entitlement for those who are taking intermittent FMLA or use FMLA to work a reduced schedule.

Intermittent Leave

An employee taking FML leave for the birth of a child or because of adoption or foster care may be allowed to take leave intermittently or by working a reduced workweek. FML leave may also be taken intermittently for qualifying exigencies under Military FML to care for a seriously ill family member or because of the employee's own serious health condition when medically necessary. Employees should make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatments so as not to unduly disrupt Department operations.

The employee and supervisor must make prior written arrangements for intermittent FML leave. Any change from a non-paid status to paid status, or vice versa, requires advance approval and notice to Human Resources.

8-06.4 Military Family Leave Entitlements

Military Caregiver Leave – Employees who are the spouse, parent, child, or next of kin to a service member who suffered a serious injury or illness on active duty in the Armed Forces,

National Guard or Reserves may take up to 26 weeks of job-protected leave in a single 12-month period to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness.

Qualifying Exigency Leave – Eligible employees may take up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave in an applicable 12-month period for any qualifying exigency (or notification of an impending call or order to active duty) arising out of the covered active-duty status of a spouse, child, or parent. For example:

- Short notice deployment;
- Military events and related activities;
- Child care duties and school activities;
- Financial and legal arrangements;
- Counseling;
- Rest and recuperation;
- Post-deployment activities; or
- Additional activities not encompassed in the other categories but agreed to by the employer and the employee.

Covered active duty under the FMLA means:

- In the case of a member of a regular component of the armed forces, duty during the deployment of the member with the armed forces to a foreign country; and
- In the case of a member of a reserve component of the armed forces, duty during the deployment of the member with the armed forces to a foreign country under a call or order to active duty under a provision of law referred to in Section 101 (a) (13) (B) of Title 10, United States Code.

Additional information regarding Military Employment Rights is contained in [Administrative Memorandum 2014](#).

8-06.5 Paid Parental Leave

As defined in Texas Government Code § Section 661.9125(1), employees are entitled to paid parental leave if they meet the eligibility requirements under the Family and Medical Leave Act for the:

- Birth of a child;
- Birth of a child by the employee's spouse;
- Birth of a child by a gestational surrogate; or
- Adoption of a child.

For the birth of a child, an employee who takes FML leave is entitled to 40 days (320 hours) of paid leave. For the birth of a child by the employee's spouse, by gestational surrogate or the adoption of a child, an employee who takes FML leave is entitled to 20 days (160 hours) of paid parental leave.

An employee must notify Human Resources of the event. Human Resources will determine if the employee is eligible for FMLA. If the employee is eligible for FMLA due to the events listed, the

employee will be granted paid leave. The employee is not required to use annual leave or sick leave before using paid parental leave.

8-06.6 Benefits

An employee's use of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that the employee earned or was entitled to before using FMLA leave. Upon return from FMLA leave, an employee must be restored to their original job, or to an equivalent job with equivalent status, with same or substantially similar duties, responsibilities, same general level of skill, effort, responsibility and authority, as well as pay, benefits, same general work schedule, geographically proximate worksite, and other employment terms and conditions.

The Department may deny restoration of employment to key employees, as defined by the regulations, but may not deny the employee FMLA leave and the maintenance of health benefits. Denial of reinstatement must be necessary to prevent substantial and grievous economic injury to the Department's operations.

Group health insurance coverage for an employee on FMLA leave will continue with the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Employees must make arrangements with Human Resources to pay their share of health insurance premiums while on unpaid FMLA leave. Failure to pay health insurance premium within the designated period of time may result in cancellation of coverage at the end of the month when the premium was last paid in full. If the employee does not return to work at the expiration of an FMLA unpaid leave status, the employee may be required to reimburse the State for health insurance premiums paid on their behalf during the unpaid leave of absence.

8-06.7 Notice and Certification

An employee does not have the option of choosing whether or not to designate leave as FML leave for a qualifying event. It is Human Resources responsibility to determine whether leave qualifies as family and medical leave.

Employees seeking to use FML leave may be required to provide:

- A 30-day advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave, when the need is foreseeable; otherwise, the employee should notify their supervisor and Human Resources as soon as is practicable.
- Medical certifications supporting the need for leave due to a serious health condition affecting the employee or an immediate family member.
- If the FMLA leave is for the employee's serious health condition, he or she *will be* required to provide to Human Resources a fitness-for-duty certification prior to returning to work, otherwise restoration to employment may be delayed. An employee who fails to return to work upon the completion of the 12 weeks of FMLA leave and who has exhausted all accrued leave may be subject to termination of employment.
- Military orders.

A medical certification from a health care provider must be submitted to Human Resources for any requests to use FML. A medical certification must be received within 21 calendar days of

notification (or as soon as practicable), otherwise the commencement/continuance of FML leave may be delayed or denied.

Additional documentation may be requested to confirm applicable family relationships. If the employee needs to request an extension to the FML leave originally requested, an updated medical certification must be submitted. When an employee seeks leave due to a previously approved qualifying reason, the employee must specifically reference either the qualifying reason for the leave or the need for family medical leave. The Department may request a second or third medical opinion at the Department's expense.

When leave is needed to care for an immediate family member or the employee's own illness and it's for planned medical treatment, the employee must attempt to schedule treatment so that it will not unduly disrupt the Department's operation.

8-06.8 Procedures

An employee who may have the need for FML leave should notify his or her supervisor and Human Resources. If a supervisor is aware of a condition that may qualify as FML leave or receives a request for FML, he or she must notify Human Resources as soon as possible. Upon notice of a condition or situation that may qualify an employee for FML leave, Human Resources will send appropriate information, instructions, and forms to the employee within five (5) business days of the notification.

Supervisors have a responsibility for assisting in the Department's compliance with state and federal requirements as it pertains to FML. Supervisors are responsible for notifying Human Resources immediately when an employee's absence may qualify for FMLA leave. The supervisor will coordinate any scheduling arrangements (particularly when intermittent leave is involved) and forward the request to Human Resources.

When an employee is ready to return to duty or if there is a change in leave status, the employee and supervisor are responsible for ensuring that Human Resources is notified in a timely manner.

8-06.9 Concerns/Complaints

It is the intent of the Department to fully comply with the provisions of the FMLA and will expeditiously handle any question or concern. If an employee feels that his or her rights under FMLA have been violated, they should immediately bring it to the attention of the Human Resources Manager or the General Counsel. Employees are encouraged to seek resolution of complaints through the Department's internal processes, however, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) is the dedicated enforcement agency for the Family and Medical Leave Act.

[Health Care Provider Certification \(Employee\) Form](#)

[Health Care Provider Certification \(Family Member\) Form](#)

Section 8-07
Emergency Leave
(Updated April 2026)

8-07.1 Eligibility

Bereavement Leave

An employee is entitled to leave with pay for a death in the employee's immediate family. An employee's immediate family is defined as the employee's spouse, as well as the employee's and spouse's parents, children, brothers, sisters, grandparents, and grandchildren. Emergency bereavement leave is limited to 24 hours unless the employee must travel out of state to attend to a death whereby an additional 16 hours may be requested.

Additional Emergency Leave

In addition to granting emergency leave for bereavement, the Commissioner may grant emergency leave for:

- Weather closings;
- Observance of a holiday;
- Voting (up to one hour per election);
- A veteran to obtain medical or mental health care administered by the Veterans Health Administration of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, including physical rehabilitation (not to exceed 15 days each fiscal year*); or
- Relief to a victim, subject, or witness to, an act or event that is subject to investigation by the agency.

**On a case by case need basis, the Commissioner may grant additional days.*

8-07.2 Approval

A request for bereavement leave must be made in writing or email and be sent to the employee's supervisor. After review, the Division/Regional Director will forward the request, along with their recommendation, to the Deputy Commissioner and Human Resources. Human Resources will notify the employee of the approval or denial of the request.

The Commissioner may only grant emergency leave if: (1) the employee has shown good cause for taking the leave, and (2) there is a belief in good faith that the employee intends to return to the agency at the expiration of the emergency leave.

Commissioner granted leave shall be taken as a block of time as granted and may not be taken incrementally over a period of time, unless otherwise authorized.

Leave granted by the Commissioner, such as emergency leave related to weather conditions or observance of a holiday, does not require a written request by an employee.

8-07.3 Reporting

No later than October 1 of each year, the agency shall report to the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts the name, position, reason, and number of hours for each employee who was granted more than 32 hours of emergency leave during the previous state fiscal year.

8-07.4 Notification

In the event that the Department closes or there are delays in the opening of an office, staff will receive notification via the Department's emergency communication platform. Department staff are required to maintain a valid email and phone number to ensure timely notifications are received, employee contact information is reviewed annually.

Section 8-08
Military Leave
(Updated December 2025)

8-08.1 Military Service Leave

State employees are eligible for 15 workdays in a federal fiscal year without loss of pay or benefits to accommodate authorized training or duty for the state's military forces, a reserve branch of the U.S. Armed Forces or a state or federally authorized urban search and rescue team.

If the employee does not use all 15 days of military leave in a fiscal year, the balance of days is carried forward to the next fiscal year, not to exceed 45 workdays. Federal fiscal years are October 1st through September 30th. Work schedule adjustments will be made for employees who are members of the Texas National Guard or a reserve branch of the U.S. Armed Forces so that two of the employee's days off each month coincide with two days of military duty.

In addition, state employees who are member of the State's military forces, a reserve branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, or a state of federally authorized urban search and rescue team who are called to **State** active duty by the Governor or another appropriate authority in response to a disaster, are entitled to a paid leave of absence, not to exceed seven workdays in a fiscal year, for each day they are called to active duty during a disaster. For the purposes of this leave, "disaster" has the meaning assigned in Texas Government Code, Section 418.004.

An employee called to **State** active duty by the governor because of an emergency is entitled to receive emergency leave without a loss of military or annual leave or deduction in salary.

An employee called to **Federal** active duty for the purpose of providing assistance to civil authorities in a declared emergency or for training for that purpose is entitled to receive paid emergency leave for not more than 22 workdays without loss of military or annual leave.

An employee called to active duty during a national emergency to serve in a reserve component of the U.S. Armed Forces under Title 10 or Title 32 of the United States Code is entitled to an unpaid leave of absence. While on this unpaid leave of absence the employee is entitled to state service for longevity pay purposes, annual leave accruals and sick leave accruals. The accruals will be posted when the employee returns to state employment. The employee will continue to accrue service credit with the Employees Retirement System by receiving at least one hour of state pay during each month of active military service. The employee may choose to use all or a portion of paid leave during this time before going into an unpaid status.

When reemployed, the individual is considered to have been on a leave of absence while in military service and may participate in retirement or other benefits to which the employee would have otherwise been entitled.

8-08.2 Medical and Mental Health Care Leave for Certain Veterans

A state employee who is a veteran, as defined by Texas Government Code § 434.023(a), and who is eligible for health benefits under a program administered by the Veterans Health Administration of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, may be granted leave without a deduction in salary or loss of vacation time, sick leave, earned overtime credit, or state compensatory time, to obtain

medical or mental health care (including physical rehabilitation) administered by the Veterans Health Administration of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Leave granted for this reason may not exceed 15 days each fiscal year unless granted by the Commissioner.

Employees requesting the use of this leave must complete the [Medical and Mental Health Form](#) and submit to their direct supervisor with supporting documentation for approval. Upon approval, the supervisor and/or employee will return the form and support documentation to Human Resources for entry into the Department's timekeeping system.

8-08.3 Additional Military Employment Rights

The Department's policy related to Military Employment Rights is contained in [Administrative Memorandum 2014](#).

Section 8-09
Jury Duty or Compliance with a Subpoena
(Updated April 2026)

8-09.1 Eligibility

Jury Duty

An employee is entitled to serve on a jury without any deduction from wages. This leave is in addition to other leave to which the employee is entitled.

Witness Duty

An employee who is required to appear in any judicial or legislative investigation will be granted leave as follows:

- If serving in an official capacity, leave will be granted without any reduction in wages. This leave is in addition to other leave to which the employee is entitled;
- If serving in an unofficial capacity, the appearance must be made on the employee's own time.

8-09.2 Approval

An employee may not be discharged, disciplined or penalized for complying with a subpoena to appear in a civil, criminal, legislative, or administrative proceeding. Before an employee may take jury or witness leave, a request for leave must be submitted to the supervisor for approval along with a copy of the jury summons or written witness summons or statement. A copy of the summons must also be attached to the timesheet.

8-09.3 Fees and/or Per Diem

Jury Duty

Any fee or compensation for jury duty need not be accounted for to the State by the employee and will not be deducted from his or her wages.

Witness Duty

An employee called to appear:

- In an official capacity is not entitled to any witness fees.
- In a private matter, may accept any customary witness fees;
- As an expert witness for a fee (must have outside employment approval – Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual Section 2-03).

Employees may receive per diem, expense reimbursements, and mileage allowances for serving as a witness in an official governmental capacity, as long as there is no double reimbursement to the employee for expenses.

Section 8-10
Other Leave Types
(Updated April 2026)

8-10.1 Volunteer Firefighter and Emergency Medical Services Leave

An employee who is a volunteer firefighter, an emergency medical services volunteer, or a search and rescue volunteer will be granted a paid leave of absence not to exceed five working days each fiscal year for attending training schools conducted by state agencies or institutions of higher education. Also, a volunteer firefighter, an emergency medical services volunteer, or a search and rescue volunteer may be granted paid leave for the purpose of responding to emergency fire, medical, or search and rescue situations.

An employee who is a volunteer of an organization that is a member of a Texas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster will be granted a paid leave of absence not to exceed ten days each fiscal year to participate in disaster relief services for a state of disaster as declared by the Governor under Texas Government Code, Chapter 418.

Before an employee may use this leave, the employee shall inform his or her supervisor of enrollment in or a plan to enroll in training conducted by a state agency or higher education institution. Prior approval for leave shall be obtained from the Commissioner by submitting a memorandum with the reason for the request and documentation of the training or service to the applicable division director. The division director will submit the request to Human Resources and the Commissioner.

8-10.2 Assistant Dog Training

An employee with a disability as defined by the Texas Human Resources Code, Section 121.002, will be granted paid leave of absence not to exceed ten working days in a fiscal year to attend a training program to acquaint the employee with an assistance dog that the employee will use.

Before an employee may utilize this leave, they shall obtain approval from the Commissioner. Documentation may be required by Human Resources.

8-10.3 Voting

Employees may be given up to two hours of voter leave, with their supervisor's approval, without a deduction in salary or accrued leave, to vote in each national, state, or local election if there is not sufficient time to vote outside regular working hours or during early voting.

8-10.4 Holidays

Any state holiday that falls within the time period an employee is using these types of leave will not be charged to the total leave granted/taken.

Section 8-11
Leave Without Pay
(Updated April 2026)

8-11.1 Eligibility

Leave without pay or leave of absence without pay (LWOP) is the temporary absence from duty. During this time of absence, which may not exceed 12 months, pay and leave accruals are suspended.

Except for disciplinary suspensions, worker's compensation, military situations, or when an exception is authorized by the Commissioner, all accumulated paid leave entitlements (overtime, compensatory time, and annual leave) must be exhausted before leave without pay can be granted. In addition, sick leave must be exhausted in those cases where the employee is eligible to take sick leave as provided in the sick leave provisions.

8-11.2 Employee's Responsibility

An employee who will be on leave without pay status for a full month or more must contact Human Resources to make arrangements to pay his or her insurance premiums.

8-11.3 Prior Approval

In circumstances where leave without pay is planned (e.g. the employee is a new employee and has not accrued leave to utilize), approval must be received from the Commissioner or his or her designee prior to leave being taken. Planned leave without pay that is not pre-approved, is subject to disciplinary action.

A request for this type of leave is processed when:

1. An employee submits a request to his or her supervisor for leave of absence without pay;
2. The employee's supervisor sends a written request, indicating his or her approval or disapproval, to the Human Resources;
3. The Human Resources Manager reviews the request and recommends approval or disapproval of the request and forwards it to the Commissioner; and
4. If the Commissioner approves the request.

8-11.4 Leave Accruals

If an employee is in a leave without pay status on the first day of the month, they will not receive his or her annual and sick leave accruals for that month. Accruals will be credited upon the employee returning to work.

Any full calendar month in which an employee is on leave without pay will not be counted in the calculation of total state service credit for the purposes of annual leave accruals, longevity pay entitlement, or merit salary provisions, except in the case of an employee returning to state employment from military leave without pay.

If an employee is in an unpaid status for a full calendar month, the month will not count toward fulfilling the six-month continuous service requirement. The month of unpaid status will not cause the employee to restart the continuous months of state service calculation.

During an employee's six-month trial period, an interruption due to leave of absence without pay will affect the trial period ending date. The date will be readjusted at the time the employee returns to paid status.

8-11.5 Holidays

An employee who is on leave of absence without pay will not receive credit for any holiday that falls within this time period.

8-11.6 Unscheduled Time Off

Occasionally, the Commissioner may grant unscheduled time off, such as agency leave or special leave for a holiday. However, an employee in non-paid status will not receive credit for the unscheduled leave time.

8-11.7 Return from Leave of Absence

Upon returning from a leave of absence without pay, the employee will have priority consideration for a comparable job if their original job is not available.

Section 8-12
Unauthorized Absence
(Updated April 2026)

8-12.1 Definition

An unauthorized absence occurs when an employee:

- Fails to report to work;
- Fails to properly notify their supervisor of the absence; or
- Takes any leave time (except sick) without prior approval.

8-12.2 Employee's Responsibility

In the interest of planning and effective work allocation, supervisors must be informed concerning absences from work. Therefore, if an employee finds it necessary to be absent from work for any reason, the employee is required to notify their supervisor as soon as possible.

8-12.3 Disciplinary Action

An unauthorized absence may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. If an employee takes unauthorized leave, the supervisor, with approval from the Commissioner and guidance from Human Resources, may disapprove the leave, note the number of hours on the monthly time sheet, and request the employee's salary be reduced for the unauthorized absence. Human Resources will document the total hours of unauthorized leave taken and the employee's pay for that month will be reduced for the unauthorized leave time.

Section 8-13
Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Overtime / Compensatory Time
(Updated April 2026)

8-13.1 Definition and Eligibility

Compensatory time is defined as the total number of hours worked in excess of the regular 40-hour work week, to include time worked on holidays. This can be further defined as either "State Compensatory Time" or "FLSA Overtime."

State Compensatory Time is the time worked on federal holidays or state holidays when minimum staffing is required. It is also time approved and worked by employees outside of regular work hours when the total time physically worked does not exceed 40 hours in an administrative workweek. State compensatory time can also be earned by FLSA exempt employees who work over 40 hours in an administrative work week. State Compensatory Time is earned at the rate of one hour for each hour worked above regular hours. All employees are eligible for State Compensatory Time.

FLSA Overtime is time worked by a non-exempt employee in excess of 40 hours in an administrative work week, exclusive of holidays or other types of leave. To earn FLSA Overtime the employee must be eligible under the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). FLSA Overtime is earned at the rate of one and one-half hours for every hour in excess of 40 hours worked in each administrative workweek.

A non-exempt employee is an employee covered by the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the FLSA. An exempt employee is exempt from these provisions. Determination of exempt or non-exempt status under FLSA is based on an employee's job duties and responsibilities.

8-13.2 Department Authorization

The earning and use of State Compensatory Time or FLSA Overtime must be specifically authorized in advance by the employee's supervisor. Supervisors are responsible for verifying and approving any accrual of compensatory time. Divisions/Regions are to minimize the need for employees to work hours more than regular work hours. Any FLSA Overtime that needs to be worked must have the advance written approval of the Division/Regional Director. Employees who ignore the advance approval requirement may be subject to disciplinary action.

Non-exempt employees are not allowed to donate time to the state or to work on their own time.

8-13.3 Meal Periods All Employees

Employees who spend meal periods at their desk must be relieved of all duty. If an employee voluntarily eats or spends their designated lunch break at their desk and answers phones or performs other work, the employee is working.

Unless prior management approval is obtained, non-exempt employees are not to perform work duties during meal periods. Absent approval, time worked will be compensated but considered unapproved, subjecting the employee to disciplinary action.

The Department requires **all** employees to take at least a 30-minute meal period per day, that is excluded as compensable time toward the workweek, for all approved schedules. A meal period is defined as that of a sufficient duration when the employee is completely relieved from duty.

The following conditions apply to meal periods for all employees:

- The meal period must be at least 30 minutes, but may be as long as one hour according to the employee's approved work schedule;
- The employee must be completely relieved of all duties during the period; and
- The employee must be free to leave the duty post (but not necessarily the premises or worksite).

To ensure that an employee is relieved of all duty while eating in their work area, these guidelines should be followed:

1. Do not read/respond to department e-mail.
2. Do not perform any Department administrative work.
3. Do not answer the telephone.
4. Post a sign at your desk that says "at lunch".
5. If approached by a co-worker, tell them you are on lunch break and you will contact them when your break is over.

8-13.4 Compensatory Time Determination

The administrative workweek is defined as a fixed and regularly recurring period of 168 hours or seven consecutive 24-hour periods. The Department maintains two administrative workweeks, Friday noon until the following Friday noon and Saturday midnight until the following Saturday midnight. Each employee is assigned a specific administrative work week based on his or her flex schedule.

The following determines how an employee earns compensatory time:

- All employees earn eight hours of State Compensatory Time for working a paid agency, state or federal holiday so designated by the state or agency.
- An exempt employee may be allowed to earn State Compensatory Time for hours worked in excess of 40 hours accumulated through a combination of paid leave taken, paid holidays or hours worked during a work week.
- A non-exempt employee who has not actually worked 40 hours in a work week does not qualify for FLSA Overtime. The employee would, however, qualify for State Compensatory Time for time approved and worked outside the regular work hours (i.e., working on a state holiday, such as San Jacinto Day).
- A non-exempt employee who may be required to physically work hours in excess of 40 hours in an administrative work week is entitled to FLSA Overtime at the rate of one and one-half hours for each hour worked over 40 hours during the work week.
- The timekeeping system, CAPPS, automatically designates hours earned as State Compensatory or FLSA Overtime based on an employee's time entries.

- Any paid leave, such as sick and annual leave, or holidays taken during the work week are not counted as hours worked in determining FLSA Overtime earned for non-exempt employees.
- Normal travel time from home to work is not considered work time. However, travel time is considered work time if:
 - The employee receives a call outside regular work hours and is required to travel a substantial distance (i.e., at least a distance farther than that traveled by the employee on their daily trips to and from work) in order to perform a job away from the designated headquarters; or,
 - When an employee who regularly works at one fixed location is given a special one-day work assignment in another city.
- If an employee travels and is required to stay overnight out of town, all time spent on such travel that occurs during the employee's regular workday is counted as work time. The time spent in a hotel, motel, or idle time is not counted as work time. Pre-authorized travel after hours on non-workdays (i.e., to attend training) will be considered work time; however, only State Compensatory Time (straight time - hour for hour) may be granted to exempt employees and non-exempt employees who work less than 40 hours in the work week. Non-exempt employees will receive FLSA Overtime for every hour in excess of 40 hours worked in the workweek.

8-13.5 Requirements for Using Compensatory Time

Compensatory time should be taken within 12 months following the end of the workweek in which the hours were earned. Compensatory time not used within 12 months will expire. When an employee uses personal leave (other than sick leave), the leave must be deducted from the employee's leave balance in the following order:

- FLSA Overtime
- State Compensatory Time / Holiday Compensatory Time
- Special Leave
- Administrative Leave
- Annual Leave

Leave should be deducted in this order unless the employee is using state comp, holiday comp time or special leave to avoid loss of these hours. Employees may use state comp, holiday comp or special leave if leave is expected to expire within a 3-month period.

An employee must be paid for any FLSA Overtime worked in excess of 240 hours. Supervisors may submit a request to pay an employee for FLSA Overtime when it is not practicable to take the time off. Employees are paid for any remaining balance of FLSA Overtime upon termination from employment. An employee may not be paid for State Compensatory Time earned.

State Compensatory time does not transfer from one agency to another, nor is there a payment of compensatory time.

Section 8-14
Holidays
 (Updated April 2026)

8-14.1 Overview

All state employees, including part-time and hourly workers, are entitled to designated state and federal holidays with pay. Holidays, which are eight-hour days, are designated and authorized by the Texas Legislature and may change each year. Employees who are in Leave Without Pay status before and after a holiday will not be paid for the holiday. Holiday schedules are posted on the Human Resources page of [DOBIE](#).

8-14.2 Holidays Currently Authorized:

HOLIDAY	DATE
New Year's Day*	1st day of January
Confederate Heroes' Day#	19th day of January
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day*	3rd Monday in January
President's Day*	3rd Monday in February
Texas Independence Day#	2nd day of March
Good Friday##	Varies
San Jacinto Day#	21st day of April
Memorial Day*	Last Monday in May
Emancipation Day#	19th day of June
Independence Day*	4th day of July
Lyndon B. Johnson Day#	27th day of August
Labor Day*	First Monday in September
Rosh Hashanah##	Varies
Yom Kippur##	Varies
Veteran's Day*	11th day of November
Thanksgiving Holidays*	4th Thursday of November and the following Friday
Christmas Holidays*	24th, 25th and 26th days of December

*National Holiday

#State Holiday - State agencies must remain open and maintain skeleton staffing

##A state employee is entitled to observe Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Good Friday, or Cesar Chavez Day in lieu of any state holiday where a skeleton crew is required.

8-14.3 Exception

Holidays falling on a Saturday or Sunday are not observed by closing state offices on the preceding or following workdays except when specific additional days are authorized by the Texas Legislature, the Governor, or the Commissioner for a holiday period.