

702 - CITIZENSHIP LEAVE: WITNESS DUTY, JURY DUTY AND VOTING

Section 702.01 County Policy on Citizenship Leave

Full-time employees of Fort Bend County shall be granted leave with pay when it is necessary to be absent in order to fulfill citizenship obligations. Employees are required to give advance notice of an absence for citizenship obligations.

Citizenship obligations are:

1. WITNESS DUTY
2. JURY DUTY
3. VOTING

Section 702.02 Witness Duty

Employees who are requested or subpoenaed to serve as a witness in a trial, deposition or other legal action must show a copy of the subpoena or other appropriate documentation to their supervisor prior to the leave for Witness Duty. An employee will not be paid for Witness Duty if he/she is a litigant. Employees are expected to return to work as soon as practicable upon completing their responsibilities as a witness. Employees may be paid their regular wage for time spent fulfilling their witness obligations if taken in accordance with this policy.

Section 702.03 Jury Duty

Employees who receive a summons to attend Jury Duty (jury selection or trial) must provide advance notice to their supervisor along with a copy of their summons. On the day of the jury selection the employee should ask for a release indicating the time they were excused from the selection. If the employee is chosen as a juror, they must notify their supervisor immediately, and keep their supervisor advised of continuing jury obligations. Employees are expected to return to work as soon as practicable following their release from jury duty. Employees may be paid their regular wage for time spent fulfilling jury obligations if taken in accordance with this policy.

Section 702.04 Advance Notice

Employees who must be absent from work to fulfill citizenship obligations are required to follow the usual leave request procedures for their office or department, and provide a copy of the appropriate documentation to their supervisor.

Section 702.05 Voting

The Texas Election Code, Chapter 276.004, provides a penalty to employers who refuse to permit an employee to be absent from work for purposes of attending the polls to vote, or subjects the employee to penalty for attending the polls to vote on election day, unless the polls are open for two consecutive hours outside of the employee's shift. Therefore, Fort Bend County employees working such a shift on Election Day shall be allowed up to two hours paid leave on Election Day in order for the employee to vote. Employees should work with their supervisors to schedule time off to vote.

At the discretion of the Department Head or Elected Official, any Fort Bend County employee may be allowed reasonable opportunity to vote on Election Day if circumstances would make it difficult for the employee to attend the polls to vote outside of their scheduled shift on Election Day. Such reasonable leave should not exceed one to two hours and shall be paid if the employee requests and receives prior approval from the department head/elected official or designee.

Employees are encouraged to avail themselves of the convenience of early voting whenever possible.

**Section 702.06
Timesheet
Documentation**

Employees are required to include a note in the comments section of their timesheet specifying the type of citizenship leave taken – witness duty, jury duty, or voting. For witness duty and jury duty, supporting documentation (such as a summons, subpoena, or release form) must be scanned and attached to the timesheet. If the required documentation is not submitted, the absence will be charged to the employees accrued vacation or compensatory leave balances.

Policy Approved and Adopted By:
Fort Bend County Commissioners Court
July 20, 1993
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