



## CITY OF NEW BRAUNFELS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### PROCEDURE(S): TEAM MEMBER LEAVE OPTIONS

**EFFECTIVE DATE: OCTOBER 1, 2022**

**REVISION DATE(S): [PREVIOUSLY LEAVE & HOUR ADMINISTRATION] FEBRUARY 27, 2020, AUGUST 4, 2020, DECEMBER 15, 2020, DECEMBER 29, 2020, SEPTEMBER 1, 2021, OCTOBER 13, 2021, DECEMBER 27, 2021, OCTOBER 1, 2022, FEBRUARY 1, 2023, OCTOBER 24, 2023, AUGUST 16, 2024, NOVEMBER 22, 2024, MAY 7, 2025, JULY 1, 2025**

## TEAM MEMBER LEAVE OPTIONS

### A. Vacation Time

Vacation shall accrue from date of hire on a predetermined number of hours per pay period and a team member may utilize vacation hours from their hire date as approved by their supervisor. A team member who terminates their employment with the City within the initial review period of employment will not be entitled to vacation pay for any vacation accrued, to include initial review extension of employment. A team member who terminates their employment after the initial review period will be entitled to payout of their accrued vacation. All full-time team members shall accrue vacation annually per the following schedule:

#### 1. Vacation Accrual Schedule [Non-Civil Service Full-Time team members, Police Officers, and Classified Fire Personnel in Administration]

Years	Hours and Accrual
0 – 10	120 hours annually [4.615 hours/per pay period]
11 – 15	136 hours annually [5.230 hours/per pay period]
16 and Above	160 hours annually [6.153 hours/per pay period]

#### 2. Vacation Accrual Schedule [Fire Operations/Shift Team members]

Years	Hours and Accrual
0 – 10	180 hours annually [6.923 hours/per pay period]
11 – 15	204 hours annually [7.846 hours/per pay period]
16 and Above	240 hours annually [9.230 hours/per pay period]



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- a. With the exception of team members who are in an initial review period status and terminate their employment with the City during the initial review period (six months for non-Civil Serviceteam members and one year for Civil Service team members), team members shall be paid at their present rate of pay for any vacation accrued at the time of their resignation, separation, termination or retirement. The team members anniversary date, i.e., month and day of the first day of employment, shall be used for calculating the accrual of vacation time. Vacation leave will not accrue for a pay period when a team member works less than half the normal hours during a pay period and is not in a paid leave status, unless that team member is on approved medical leave, then accruals will continue.
- b. The City Manager may, for recruitment purposes, adjust the beginning rate for accruing vacation for any new team member.
- c. Vacation may only be requested or approved for day(s) and hours that the team member was already scheduled to work. Vacation hours cannot be used in place of scheduled workdays and/or hours off, except for *Police Department personnel participating in the "Step Grant" traffic enforcement program*.
- d. Team members may not use a combination of scheduled workdays and/or hours and vacation hours in the same day or within a pay period in an effort to increase productive time, except for *Police Department personnel participating in the "Step Grant" traffic enforcement program*.

#### **1. Vacation for Part-Time Regular Team Members**

Part-Time Regular team members shall accrue vacation at 75% of Non-Civil Service Full-Time team members. For example, a part time regular team member who has worked between 0-10 years, will have an accrual rate of  $(4.615 * .75 = 3.461)$ .

#### **2. Vacation for Part-Time, Temporary or Seasonal Team Members**

Part-time team members who are authorized to work 1,000 or less hours annually, temporary, and seasonal team members are not entitled to earn vacation leave.



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### **3. Vacation Carry-Over**

An individual may carry-over all vacation accrued from the previous year. They may not carry over or hold over more than the sum of their present year's vacation and their previous year's vacation unless approved by the City Manager.

## **B. Holidays**

1. The City Council will approve and schedule all City holidays. A list of holidays and the schedule for the upcoming calendar year will be distributed to team members prior to the expiration of the current calendar year. If the holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday shall be observed, and if a holiday falls on a Sunday, the following Monday shall be observed as the holiday. If two consecutive holidays fall partially on a weekend, the City Manager shall designate the days to be observed as holidays.
2. Team members on unpaid leave preceding or following a holiday will not be paid for the holiday.
3. As many team members as possible shall be given each holiday off consistent with appropriate staffing for essential City functions.
4. Full-time, non-exempt team members - shall be granted paid holidays at their current rate of pay for eight [8] hours of straight time.
5. Full time, non-exempt team members scheduled to work on holidays will be compensated at one and one-half times their regular pay up to eight [8] hours. Hours worked count as productive time and count towards the computation of overtime.
6. An exempt team member who is scheduled to work on an official holiday may take the holiday at a later date.
7. Temporary, seasonal, part time regular and part-time team members do not receive holiday pay benefits.

## **C. Paid Absences**



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#### **1. Jury Duty**

Full-time team members called for jury service shall be granted special absence with pay during such service and shall retain the fee paid by the courts. A team member excused or released from jury service during working hours shall report to work. The team member shall submit a copy of the jury summons or statement of jury service to their Manager/Supervisor.

#### **2. Witness**

Full- or part-time team members will be excused with pay to testify in any criminal or civil proceedings related to the team member's employment with the City or their official duties, or to fulfill their civic duty to testify as a witness in a judicial proceeding where the team member has no personal benefit and when served with a subpoena. The team member shall submit a copy of the subpoena to their Manager/Supervisor.

#### **3. Court Appearances**

Team members' off-duty time will be compensated in accordance with state and federal statutes. If a full or part-time team member has a personal interest or benefit in the judicial proceedings, the team member may use vacation, compensatory time or leave without pay for the absence.

### **D. Volunteer Time Off**

The City of New Braunfels supports its employees in their desire to participate and serve in humanitarian efforts in the communities in which we live and work. Incorporating volunteer work into an employee's balance of work and home life can be difficult, and often prevents employees from participating in opportunities to serve. In addition to serving our organization where we provide quality services to our citizens, the Volunteer Time Off program (VTO) provides employees with a paid time off benefit to serve in meaningful ways within our community to enrich the lives of those within the City of New Braunfels. This policy also serves as an additional means of creating strong ties between employees and the New Braunfels community.



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#### **1. Eligibility**

All regular full-time employees who have completed their probationary period and are meeting performance standards are eligible to participate in the VTO.

#### **2. Service Hours**

A maximum of up to 16 paid service hours are available annually at the start of each calendar year to eligible employees. Service hours do not roll over from year to year and must be used within the calendar year. This time is refreshed at the beginning of each calendar year unless the city amends or discontinues the program. Unused service hours at the end of the calendar year are forfeited, and employees will not receive a payout for the balance of any unused service hours at the end of their service with the city.

#### **3. Qualifying Service Activities**

Employees have the flexibility to support activities that enhance and serve the New Braunfels Community. Acceptable service opportunities include in-person interaction between the employee and a member(s) of the community. Service activities must benefit the community members of the City of New Braunfels. Activities involving political groups or causes do not qualify for the use of VTO. Organizations that discriminate based on race, color, national origin, age, religion, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, disability, veteran's status or genetic information will not be eligible for the service time program with the City of New Braunfels.

Below is a list of appropriate and inappropriate activities. This is not a comprehensive list of activities and employees who are unsure if their service idea will qualify for VTO should contact their supervisor or the Human Resources Department.

Appropriate examples for VTO:

- Donating time at a food bank
- Cleaning up the river or park



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- Tutoring students
- Assisting teachers on a field trip or classroom (not your own)
- Participating in a walk, run, or bike a thon

Inappropriate examples for VTO:

- Taking a ski vacation and providing ski lessons charitably
- Coaching your child's soccer team
- Attending a professional, personal, or religious interest conference
- Taking a shopping trip
- Taking a vacation or sick day

### **E. Use of Service Time**

VTO is intended to allow a City team member to volunteer during their regular scheduled shift but can be requested to be used outside of regular scheduled shift hours as necessary. Approval of all VTO is at the discretion of the employee's supervisor, and employees may participate in VTO only after receiving approval from their immediate supervisor. Supervisors should make reasonable accommodations to allow for VTO and encourage their employees to serve. However, supervisors are given discretion to deny VTO requests to accommodate departmental workload and staff scheduling requirements.

Service Time will be used to calculate the total number of weekly hours for non-exempt employees. Team members will only receive paid time at their regular rate of pay for VTO hours. VTO hours cannot be used as work time for FLSA purposes, as this time is not part of a team member's regular job duties and participation in this program is voluntary. Mileage, food, and any other expenses will not be reimbursed. Employees are required to supply some form of documentation that substantiates participation in the of VTO eligible activity. Documentation can be a confirmation e-mail from the agency, picture of participation, copy of volunteer log, etc.

### **F. Misuse of Service Time**



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False and misleading statements for VTO requests or employees who use VTO for unapproved activities will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

### G. Leave

#### 1. Sick Leave Usage

- a. Sick leave is defined as paid time away from work due to a bona fide illness or injury that prevents the team member from working, or visits to the doctor or dentist, or to care for family members (spouse, son, daughter, or parent) who are ill or injured. Team members are also able to utilize sick time for mental health purposes, as the City of New Braunfels recognizes that mental health is just as important as maintaining physical health, and supports establishing a workplace that is comfortable, healthy, safe, and supportive.
- b. Sick leave will accrue, and team members may use, sick leave from date of hire.

Team members who use three [3] or more continuous workdays/shifts of sick leave at one time or, at the Department Director's request, will be required to provide medical proof of illness upon or prior to returning to work.

- In cases of extended illness/injury [i.e., more than three [3] workdays or shifts] team members must call in and advise their department of their condition and progress a minimum of every three [3] workdays or shifts and furnish their supervisor with a doctor's report each time they visit the doctor.

#### 2. Full-Time Team Members Accrual

- a. Full-time team members accrue sick leave at the rate of  $3.6923 \times 26 = 95.999$  hours per pay period [96 hours/year].
- b. Police Officers and Classified Fire personnel in Administration accrue sick leave at the rate of  $4.6 \times 26 = 119.60$  hours per pay period [120 hours/year].



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- c. Fire Operations/shift team members accrue sick leave at the rate of  $6.9 \times 26 = 179.40$  hours per pay period [180 hours/year].

### **3. Part-Time Regular Team Members Accrual**

- a. Part-time regular (PTR) team members accrue sick leave at the rate of  $2.7692 \times 26 = 71.999$  hours per pay period [72 hours/year].. Part time team members who are authorized to work 1,000 or less hours annually, temporary and seasonal team members are not entitled to earn sick leave.

### **4. Maximum Accrual and Payout - Regular Non-Civil Service Team Members**

- a. Any regular non-civil service full-time team member will not accrue more than 960 hours of sick leave and will be eligible to be compensated for the sick leave hours up to 480 hours at a rate of one hour of pay per hour of sick leave. These full-time team member eligibility requirements for pay out of sick leave hours are as follows:
  - 1. Retirement - A team member must have ten [10] years of continuous service with the City of New Braunfels and retire with TMRS.
  - 2. Resignation - A team member must have fifteen [15] years of continuous service with the City of New Braunfels.

### **5. Maximum Accrual and Payout - Police and Fire Shift Personnel**

- a. Police Officer, sworn Fire personnel in Administration, and Fire Operations/shift will not have a maximum accrual, and will be compensated for sick leave hours up to the below designated maximum at a rate of one hour of pay per hour of sick leave accrued upon leaving employment, assuming the team member has successfully completed their one-year probationary period as defined by Civil Service Rules and Regulation. Sick leave purchased by the City shall be deleted from the team member's record.
  - 1. All Police Officers shall be compensated for sick leave hours up to 720 hours.
  - 2. Fire shift team members shall be compensated for sick leave hours up to 1,080 hours.

### **6. Leave Payout Adjustment for Administrative Firefighters**





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Firefighters on administrative assignment will receive sick leave payout at separation based on their current rank and step at their shift pay hourly rate. Accrued sick leave will be paid up to the max of 1,080 hours.

Any hours worked in the pay period on the team member's final pay check (not accrual payouts) will be paid at the regular administrative assignment hourly rate. Adjustments may be made using the most efficient method for calculating the payout.

### **H. Quarantine Leave**

In compliance with HB2073, uniform first responders will be placed on paid Quarantine Leave when ordered to quarantine or isolate by a supervisor or health authority due to a possible or known exposure to a communicable disease while on duty.

### **I. Bereavement Leave**

- a. Available on first day of employment, full time team members are allowed up to twenty-four [24] hours annually of bereavement leave for a death, or hospitalization for serious illness or injury when death is imminent of a loved one.
- b. Team members may be paid for absences exceeding three (3) working days in the calendar year if they utilize accrued vacation, sick leave or compensatory time and have the prior approval of their Manager/Supervisor.
- c. Team members who have exhausted their annual Bereavement Leave and have also exhausted their vacation, sick, and compensatory accruals may submit a request through their supervisor to the Human Resources Director for consideration of additional paid bereavement time.

### **J. Discretionary Leave**

1. Exempt team members are paid a salary for all services rendered as opposed to payment of wages for actual hours worked. Accordingly, exempt team members are not entitled to overtime pay or compensatory time off. The City recognizes that, from time to



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time, exempt team members must work excessive hours to meet customer and City needs. Department Directors may grant exempt team members discretionary leave when excessive hours are worked by exempt team members. Directors should require discretionary hours earned to be used in a reasonable amount of time, ideally within the same pay period in which they are earned.

2. Approval of discretionary leave requests by Department Directors will be based on management's judgment regarding the availability of appropriate staff to meet City requirements and needs as well as the appropriateness of the request.
3. Emergency Management - During emergencies, the City Manager may grant discretionary leave with pay to all or certain team members when, for safety reasons, they should not be required to report to work. Those team members who are still required to work during a period of emergency discretionary leave will not receive overtime or compensatory time for hours worked during the normal workday or shift [if non-exempt].

### **K. Administrative Leave**

1. A team member may be placed on administrative leave for assessment or evaluation of their ability to perform the duties of their current position. Administrative leave may also be used in a disciplinary action with the concurrence of the City Manager and the Human Resources Department. Use of administrative leave to complete an assessment/evaluation of a team member's ability to perform their job duties will provide the team member and/or the City the time to allow a professional to complete the fitness evaluation/assessment. Administrative leave with pay shall be granted for assessment and evaluation purposes.
2. Administrative leave without pay in connection with an investigation may be implemented by the Department Director or City Manager. The Department Director and Human Resources Director, with City Manager's approval, will determine the appropriate length of time for the team member to be placed on administrative leave.

### **L. Catastrophic Leave**



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The purpose of the Catastrophic Leave Donation Policy is to aid eligible team members and family members as defined in the Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) team members, their spouse or domestic partner, child, or parent, who are experiencing a serious medical hardship, catastrophic illness, or catastrophic life event and have exhausted all paid leave by giving them a temporary salary and benefit continuation. This policy allows team members to donate sick leave to a “bank” to be utilized by team members who meet the eligibility requirements. Eligibility is only awarded to those team members who have exhausted all forms of paid leave and meet the definition of having a “serious medical hardship, catastrophic illness or injury, or catastrophic life event.” Team members on catastrophic leave will continue to accrue vacation and sick leave.

#### **1. Serious Medical Hardship/Catastrophic Illness**

Serious medical hardship or catastrophic illness or injury includes conditions which severely impact the health of the team member or eligible family member, unusually prolonged or complex illness, often life threatening, and requires absence from work. Typically, these conditions must also meet the eligibility for the Family Medical Leave Act [FMLA], but it is not a requirement for use of catastrophic leave. This includes end of life care.

#### **2. FMLA Requirement**

Typically, the team member with the serious medical hardship or catastrophic illness or injury must also meet all of the eligibility definitions of the Family Medical Leave Act [FMLA]. Any donated time the recipient uses from the Catastrophic Leave Bank will count as FMLA time unless the FMLA time has expired and the team member has previously met all of the eligibility requirements [i.e., having worked at least 1,250 hours during the last twelve months]. Requests will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and approved by the City Manager or designee.

#### **3. Catastrophic Life Event**

Catastrophic life events will also be considered as requests for use of the City’s catastrophic leave to support team members who have to be out of work due to serious, non-medical life circumstances out of their control, including, but not limited to, house fires or any type of natural disasters that affects the living arrangement of a team member. Requests will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and approved



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by the City Manager or designee.

#### **4. Non-Qualifying Conditions**

Medical conditions including normal pregnancy, common surgeries, illnesses, or injuries.

#### **5. Recipient**

The recipient must be a full or part-time team member who is eligible to accrue and use sick/vacation, has exhausted all paid leave, and has met the definition of a “serious medical hardship, catastrophic illness or injury, or catastrophic life event” The donated leave must be utilized for the serious illness or injury of the team member or eligible family member, or catastrophic life event of the team member or eligible family member as defined by this policy and under FMLA.

#### **6. Additional Guidelines**

- a. Must have completed one [1] year of continuous service.
- b. The requesting team member must complete a written request form and submit to the Human Resources Department.
- c. The maximum number of hours that a team member may receive in a lifetime from the bank is 480 hours or 672 hours if a Fire Department Operations team member. The City Manager, or designee, shall authorize the number of hours received at one time, and if additional hours shall be granted, and approve these requests. The amount of pay received will be based on the recipient’s current salary. These hours are based on FMLA calculations. Part-time team members will receive a pro-rated amount based on their work schedule.
- d. Team members are ineligible to use this Policy if they are receiving or have applied for Workers’ Compensation Benefits.
- e. Unused Leave will be returned to the Catastrophic Leave Bank.
- f. Finance will administer the donated time and pay the recipient based on the current payroll schedule and deadlines for form submission. Time will be deducted from the donor’s sick leave account into the catastrophic bank, and then paid to the recipient from the catastrophic bank.



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- g. The City can amend or stop the program at any time.
- h. The City will comply with all HIPAA laws and regulations at all times. The identity of the donors and recipients will be kept confidential except as required to administer this policy.
- i. In the event approved multiple requests are received to participate in the Catastrophic Leave Program, the hours may be divided equally between the recipients based on the balance in the Catastrophic Leave Bank.
- j. There is no appeal process if a request is denied.

### **7. Donating Eligibility**

- a. The leave donor may not revoke the leave donation once the donation is made in writing. The leave donor fills out and submits a leave donation form to the Human Resources Department. Leave donation is anonymous and cannot be designated to a specific team member.
- b. The donor may only donate actual sick time already accrued and not prior to accrual.
- c. The donor may not drop below a minimum of one [1] year of accrual (96 hours).
- d. The donor may not donate more than 96 hours in a fiscal year.
- e. If a team member is retiring, they may donate unlimited sick hours.
- f. Donations can only be used for current or future catastrophic needs and not to pay someone retroactively.
- g. Donations must be made in 8-hour increments.

### **M. Leave of Absence (Unpaid)**

This section does not apply to team members with an approved FMLA claim and/or have a balance for any leave accruals to include vacation, sick, compensatory, and/or catastrophic. All accruals will be applied before team member goes into an unpaid status.

- 1. An unpaid leave of absence may be granted to a team member by the team members Department Director and the Human Resources Department for a period of up to thirty [30] calendar days.



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2. Any unpaid leave more than 30 calendar days must be granted by the City Manager, or designee, after receiving a recommendation from the Department Director.
3. Unpaid leave of absences should be job-related and not funded by the City.
4. The Department Director, the Human Resources Department and City Manager's authority under this section is completely discretionary.

### **N. Compensatory Time**

Compensatory leave is time off earned by a non-exempt team member in lieu of overtime pay. Team members are encouraged to take compensatory time off to compensate for overtime hours worked.

1. Non-exempt team members compensatory time is earned at the rate of one and one-half [1½] hours for each hour of overtime worked. A team member entitled to receive overtime pay may, with the approval of the Manager/Supervisor, elect to receive compensatory time off instead of overtime pay. A team member may not accrue compensatory time unless the team member actually works more than forty [40] hours in one [1] week or works more than their established work period for overtime purposes [police and fire team members].
2. The Fire and Police Departments may require team members to accrue compensatory time to attend training classes.
3. Overtime paid through the River Activities Fund is not eligible to accrue as compensatory time and will be required to be paid as overtime in the pay period it is earned.
4. The maximum amount of compensatory time that a team member may accrue and accumulate is 80 hours. When a team member accrues a balance of 80 hours of compensatory leave time, the City will pay overtime.
5. The team members Manager/Supervisor must approve the use of compensatory leave time and the team member will be allowed to use it within a reasonable time.
6. If a team member terminates their employment with the City, the City will pay the team member their accrued balance of compensatory time at the team members current rate of pay.



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7. If a team member is promoted or transfers from a non-exempt position to an exempt position, the team member shall be paid their accrued compensatory time at the time of the promotion at their non-exempt position current rate of pay.
8. A team member may provide a written request, to receive pay for accrued compensatory time. The City reserves the right to pay team members for their accrued compensatory time at any time.
9. Compensatory time may be taken in increments of not less than one [1] hour.
10. Exempt team members are not entitled to accrue compensatory time. Please reference *Discretionary Leave*.

### **O. Mental Health Leave and Traumatic Event Leave (TEL)**

The City of New Braunfels is committed to supporting the mental health and well-being of all team members. In alignment with Section 614.015 of the Texas Government Code, which mandates Traumatic Event Leave (TEL) for certain peace officers, the City has expanded mental health leave provisions to apply to all full-time team members who experience a traumatic event in the course and scope of their work.

The goal of this expansion is to provide supportive and responsive leave options for team members who may be impacted by emotionally or psychologically distressing workplace experiences. The City recognizes that mental health is just as important as physical health, and strives to promote a healthy, safe, and compassionate work environment.

#### **1. Definitions**

##### **a. Mental Health Leave**

Administrative leave with pay granted in response to a traumatic event that occurred during the course and scope of the team member's job.

##### **b. Traumatic Event Leave (TEL)**

Paid mental health leave required under Section 614.015 of the Texas Local Government Code, applicable specifically to peace officers who directly experience certain types of



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traumatic events as defined in the statute.

c. **Mental Health Professional**

A licensed social worker, counselor, psychologist, psychiatrist, or similarly credentialed mental health provider.

d. **Traumatic Event**

A workplace-related incident that causes a team member to experience intense emotional or psychological distress, which may interfere with the individual's well-being or ability to function in the workplace. These events can vary in type and impact and may include but are not limited to direct exposure to death or serious injury; responding to or witnessing violent or disturbing situations; or being involved in emotionally overwhelming duties. The City acknowledges that responses to traumatic events are subjective and may differ between individuals.

## 2. Conditions for Leave

Mental health leave may be granted following a traumatic event experienced during the course and scope of employment. The event must result in a documented or reasonably observed emotional or psychological impact. Because each person processes trauma differently, the City will evaluate requests on a case-by-case basis with a presumption toward supporting the team member's need for recovery.

For team members who qualify under **TEL**, traumatic events are defined per Section 614.015 and generally include:

- Disasters or incidents involving multiple casualties
- Situations resulting in serious injury or death





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- Death of a child
- Line-of-duty death or serious injury of another officer
- Any other extraordinary circumstance as approved by the Chief of Police or designee

### **3. Requesting Mental Health Leave**

To request mental health leave, team members must complete and submit the Mental Health Leave Request Form to Human Resources for review. Team members are expected to notify their immediate supervisor of their intent to take leave and provide an anticipated timeframe for their absence. If a team member is not available to initiate the request, Department Directors may consult with Human Resources to obtain the necessary information and initiate leave procedures.

For peace officers requesting TEL, the request shall be submitted to the Chief of Police or designee and will be granted unless a specific compelling reason exists to deny it. TEL may also be initiated at the Chief's discretion based on awareness of the officer's involvement in a qualifying event.

### **4. Effect on Paid Leave Balances**

Team members granted mental health leave or TEL will not have their vacation, sick, compensatory time, or other paid leave balances reduced. The leave is paid and separate from other leave accruals.

### **5. Confidentiality of Request**

Requests for mental health leave are confidential. Information related to the request should not be disclosed beyond what is necessary to facilitate the leave and ensure proper documentation and



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coverage. Confidentiality may only be waived under the following conditions:

- The team member chooses to waive confidentiality
- There is reason to believe the individual poses a danger to themselves or others, requiring coordination with professionals

Any breach of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action.

### **6. Team Member Responsibilities**

Team members should communicate openly with their supervisor if they experience mental, emotional, or psychological distress following a workplace-related incident. They are encouraged to consider leave and/or consult with a licensed mental health professional when advised. Conversations will be handled respectfully and in compliance with confidentiality requirements.

Team members are also responsible for:

- Notifying their supervisor about the need for leave and the expected duration
- Submitting a completed Mental Health Leave Request Form to Human Resources

### **7. Department Director Responsibilities**

Department Directors and Leadership are expected to privately meet with any team member who has experienced a traumatic event during the course and scope of their duties. During this meeting, leadership should offer support and assist the team member in coordinating with Human Resources for mental health leave, if needed. Leaders should emphasize support for the team member throughout their recovery process and are expected to uphold strict confidentiality at all times. If it is determined that the team member may benefit from crisis intervention services, Human



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Resources should be contacted immediately to ensure appropriate support is provided.

#### **8. Documenting Mental Health Leave**

Approved mental health leave must be documented through the Mental Health Leave Request Form, routed through Human Resources for appropriate payroll processing. If a request is denied, written notice must be provided to the team member explaining the reason.

Mental health leave and TEL may run concurrently with FMLA, if applicable. Benefits, seniority, and applicable special pay continue while the team member is on leave. Leave under this policy does not accrue and is not carried over.

#### **9. Duration of Mental Health Leave and Extension Requests**

Team members may be granted up to three (3) working days of mental health leave per traumatic event. Leave does not have to be taken consecutively.

If additional leave is necessary, the team member may:

1. Use accrued leave time; or
2. Request an extension with supporting documentation from a licensed mental health professional

Extensions may be granted for up to an additional three (3) working days per request, with a maximum of two extensions per event. The Department Director (or Chief of Police for TEL) must approve extensions in writing, in coordination with Human Resources

The City reserves the right to require a fitness for duty evaluation before the team member returns to work, if deemed necessary.



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### **10. Counseling and Mental Health Reimbursement**

The City of New Braunfels acknowledges the importance of supporting the mental health and well-being of first responders and their families, and designates Tania Glenn & Associates as the primary provider for mental health and crisis intervention services. However, team members may seek counseling elsewhere if they feel a different provider is more appropriate for their needs.

#### **Reimbursement Guidelines:**

- Team member must consult with HR before beginning services with an outside provider
- Counseling must be conducted by a licensed mental health professional
- HR must approve reimbursement eligibility in advance
- Reimbursement is capped at \$200/month for co-pays or out-of-pocket expenses
- Receipts must clearly show provider name, date of service, and amount paid
- Approved reimbursements will be processed through Finance and included in the team member's paycheck.
- The City reserves the right to verify the eligibility of the counseling provider, and the appropriateness of the services rendered.
- This policy applies to all full-time uniform Police Department and Fire Department team members seeking mental health services for conditions such as anxiety, mood disorders, trauma, PTSD, stress, or family/relationship issues.

### **P. Paid Parental Leave (PPL)**



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Flexible and family-friendly policies are essential to cultivating an atmosphere where team members can thrive professionally without sacrificing essential family obligations. The City of New Braunfels provides Paid Parental Leave (PPL) to team members following the birth of a team members child or the placement of a child with a team member in connection with adoption, foster care, or other legal placement to care for and bond with the child. This policy will be in effect for birth(s) or placement of child(ren) on/after April 16, 2022.

#### **1. Scope**

The City of New Braunfels provides up to 80 hours a rolling 12-month time frame. In no case will a team member receive more PPL during a rolling 12-month time frame regardless of whether more than one birth, adoption, or foster care placement occurs within that time frame. If both parents are employed by the City, and each is eligible for PPL as provided in this policy, each parent may use their allotted maximum of PPL.

For adoptions, the team member may choose whether the date of adoption of a child is the date the child is placed in the team member's home in anticipation of legal adoption or the date the adoption is approved by a court of law.

Each week of PPL is compensated at 100 percent of the team member's regular, straight-time weekly pay. PPL will be paid on a bi-weekly basis on regularly scheduled pay dates.

Approved PPL may be taken at any time during the 26-week period immediately following the birth, adoption, or placement. Team members may take PPL continuously or intermittently (intermittent schedule must be approved by supervisor), but all PPL must be used during the 26 weeks following the child's birth, adoption, or placement. Any unused PPL will be forfeited at the end of the 26-week time frame. Upon termination of the individual's employment at the City, team members will not be paid for any unused PPL for which they were eligible.



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If a City holiday occurs while the team member is on PPL, the absence will be charged to holiday pay.

### **2. Eligibility**

Eligible team members must be employed in a full-time position and meet one of the following criteria:

- Have given birth to a child;
- Be a co-parent of a person who has given birth to a child;
- Have adopted a child age 17 or younger, except for adoption by one spouse of the other spouse's child; or
- Placement with the team member of a foster child, or other child, to whom the team member stands in the position of a parent (*in loco parentis*), age 17 or younger.

PPL is not allowed for placement of a child in parental custody cases or legal assignments as a Guardian ad Litem.

### **3. Requesting PPL**

PPL runs concurrently with FMLA when FMLA is available; however, if a team member has exhausted all available FMLA because of a reason that is not the birth, adoption, or placement of a child, the team member is still eligible for PPL. The team member must submit their FMLA request to Human Resources within 30 days prior to the proposed date of the leave (or if the need for leave was not foreseeable, as soon as possible after the need for leave is identified). The team member must complete the necessary forms and provide all documentation as required by Human Resources to substantiate the request.

If FMLA is available, in no case will the total amount of leave for the birth, adoption, foster care, or other legal placement, whether paid or unpaid, granted to the team member exceed 12



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weeks. Available leave (for example, sick, vacation, holiday) may be used to extend paid leave beyond the 80 hours of PPL. Team members are not required to exhaust all leave before taking PPL.

The City of New Braunfels will maintain all benefits for team members during the PPL period just as if they were taking any other paid leave.