

## **Guidance for Departments for Compensating Employees During Office Closures Caused by Flood Emergency**

Harvey has had a tremendous negative impact on many of our employees and their families. First and foremost, our thoughts and prayers go out to them.

Essential services of County departments must be maintained even if regular working facilities are not available. Many departments are directly involved in the ongoing response to this emergency situation.

At this time, we do not believe the downtown buildings will be available for the rest of this week. Only employees designated as Red Team (essential services) or those directed by their supervisor should attempt to report to work in downtown.

Employees who have available vacation, comp, or floating holiday can use that to cover the hours missed and sick leave is available for absences caused by illness or injury. Department Heads may ask for documentation to substantiate any amount of sick leave used.

For employees unable to work at their regular locations, there are a variety of options to help employees avoid being docked if they are willing and able to work. These include departments authorizing employees to work on actual County business or training from home and reporting the time spent as Hours Actually Worked. Department Heads/designee who want staff to have access to online training should send an email to [Gracie.Guillen@bmd.hctx.net](mailto:Gracie.Guillen@bmd.hctx.net) with a list of their employees. Any work or training performed at home should be documented. We have attached a form the employee should complete, sign, and submit with his/her timesheet.

With Department Head or supervisor approval, employees, **primarily those who are at risk of being docked**, may volunteer at a local shelter and count the service hours as Hours Actually Worked. We have attached a form the employee should complete, sign, and submit with his/her timesheet to document such service. While we want to encourage everyone who is available to volunteer to help those less fortunate, we are still responsible for protecting the public coffers. Therefore, employees may not record as Hours Actually Worked any more volunteer hours than they need to avoid being docked. Department Heads are responsible for monitoring those hours.

Finally, we are working with Commissioners Court to develop an appropriate strategy for those employees hardest hit by the storm, e.g. those whose residences are uninhabitable. We anticipate Court authorizing a mechanism for those employees to continue being paid for a limited period if they have no paid leave available, with the ability to make up the time later. We are taking this extraordinary measure because of the extraordinary circumstances.

In the meantime, we appreciate all of the hard work our first responders have and are putting in to keep our community as safe as possible. We encourage all of you to stay informed as this weather system continues to impact our area.