

## **OP-101 MENTAL HEALTH LEAVE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE FOR PEACE OFFICERS AND TELECOMMUNICATORS**

### **1.0 Purpose.**

The purpose of this administrative procedure is to provide guidance in following Chapter 614.015 of the Texas Government Code as well as to document Tarrant Regional Water District's provision of mental health leave for authorized peace officers and telecommunicators who experience a traumatic event in the scope of employment.

### **2.0 Scope.**

This administrative procedure applies to all authorized peace officers and telecommunicators employed with Tarrant Regional Water District. The Lieutenant for the Law Enforcement Division or person identified by the Reservoirs Director, will be responsible for communicating and implementing this administrative procedure.

### **3.0 Definitions.**

Law Enforcement Division refers to the Tarrant Regional Water District department that commissions peace officers and telecommunicators licensed by Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE).

Mental Health Professional refers to a person who by education and experience is professionally qualified to provide counselling interventions designed to facilitate individual achievement of human development goals and remediate mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders, and associated distresses, which interfere with mental health and development. This person must be licensed to provide services in the State of Texas.

A TCOLE licensed employee employed by Tarrant Regional Water District's Law Enforcement Division in a peace officer, telecommunicator, or leadership position.

Scope of Employment means an activity of any kind or character that has to do with and originates in the work, business, trade, or profession of the employer and that is performed by an employee while engaged in or about the furtherance of the affairs or business of the employers.

Traumatic Event means an event, series of events, incident, or set of circumstances that is experienced by the employee, during the scope of employment, as physically harmful, emotionally harmful, or life-threatening and that has the potential to cause lasting adverse effects on the employee's functioning and mental, physical, social, or emotional well-being outside of the typical setting for the position. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Fatal Accident
- Line of duty death, homicide or suicide of an individual
- Use of force resulting in death or serious bodily injury
- In-custody death

- Any incident in which the officer, while acting in a law enforcement capacity, experiences or witnesses serious bodily injury or threatened serious bodily injury by another person(s)
- Participation in recovery efforts related to a natural disaster such as a tornado, hurricane, flood, fire, or earthquake
- Participation in response and recovery efforts related to a terroristic attack
- Any investigations by an employee involving abuse of individuals
- Experiencing sexual assault while acting in a law enforcement capacity

#### **4.0 The Main Procedure.**

##### Requesting Mental Health Leave

Upon experiencing a traumatic event, a peace officer or telecommunicator may make a verbal or written request for mental health leave to the Lieutenant.

##### Consideration and Requirements of Leave

The Lieutenant may approve up to 3 scheduled work shifts of paid mental health leave for the requesting peace officer or telecommunicator, per traumatic event. The Lieutenant shall notify the Reservoirs Director and Human Resources in writing of the approval. Human Resources will utilize accrued Extended Sick hours for timekeeping and payroll purposes for approved Mental Health Leave.

If a peace officer or telecommunicator requests more than 3 scheduled work shifts of mental health leave under this administrative procedure, additional hours shall be requested by following the Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) process through Human Resources. For more information on FMLA see [Fact Sheet #280: Mental Health Conditions and the FMLA | U.S. Department of Labor](#). Tarrant Regional Water District allows eligible employees to utilize Extended Sick hours while out on FMLA leave.

##### Confidentiality

Any requests for mental health leave shall be confidential. Such requests, including approval or denial of the request, shall remain confidential and provide anonymity for a peace officer or telecommunicator who takes mental health leave.