

# **TARRANT COUNTY**

## **QUARANTINE AND ISOLATION POLICY**

### **I. POLICY STATEMENT**

Chapter 180, Texas Local Government Code, provides financial protections to peace officers, detention officers, and emergency medical technicians who are quarantined or isolated as a result of exposure to a communicable disease. The statute requires employers to offer paid leave to these employees and prohibits the use of the affected employee's personal or vacation leave during the quarantine or isolation period. The paid leave under this policy will be consistent with the employee's base rate of pay.

The Tarrant County Commissioners Court, being the County's policy development and budgetary control body, is the final authority in defining the Quarantine Policy under Chapter 180, Texas Government Code relating to Quarantine Leave for peace officers, detention officers, and emergency medical technicians quarantined due to a possible or known exposure to a communicable disease while on duty. The Commissioners Court may authorize exceptions to this policy or amend this policy at any time.

### **II. DEFINITIONS**

Detention Officer is an individual appointed or employed by Tarrant County as a County jailer or other individual responsible for the care and custody of individuals incarcerated in a County jail. This shall include employees in the Confinement Bureau of the Sheriff's Office and Detention Division of Juvenile Services.

Peace Officer is an individual described by Article 2.12, Code of Criminal Procedure, who is elected or employed by or appointed by a political subdivision.

Emergency Medical Technician is an individual who is certified as a medical technician under Chapter 773, Health and Safety Code, and is employed by the County.

Health Authority is a physician appointed under the provisions of Section 121.021 of the Health and Safety Code to administer state and local laws relating to public health within the appointing body's jurisdiction.

Communicable Disease means an illness that occurs through the transmission of an infectious agent or its toxic products from a reservoir to a susceptible host, either directly, as from an infected person or animal, or indirectly through an intermediate plant or animal host, a vector, or the inanimate environment that is required to be reported to the Texas Department of Health by the Texas Health and Safety Section 81.041.7.

Quarantine is a strict isolation imposed to prevent the spread of disease or a separation from others after exposure.

Isolation is a separation of an infected or suspected infected person from others.

Quarantine Leave means an officer's time away from work due to quarantine or isolation pursuant to this Quarantine and Isolation Policy.

### **III. POLICY GUIDELINES**

Peace officers, detention officers, and emergency medical technicians who are on Quarantine Leave shall receive all employment benefits and compensation, including leave accruals, pension benefits, and health plan benefits for the duration of the quarantine or isolation. While on Quarantine Leave, an employee's sick/personal leave balance, vacation leave balance, holiday leave balance, or other paid leave balances will not be reduced.

Employees on Quarantine Leave are eligible for reimbursement for reasonable costs related to quarantine or isolation including lodging, medical care, and transportation. Prior to incurring any costs related to reimbursement pursuant to this policy, employees must contact Budget and Risk Management for additional instructions.

An employee may only be placed on Quarantine Leave by their supervisor or by the County's Local Health Authority ("LHA") or designee, in accordance with directives provided by the LHA. Supervisors who place an employee on Quarantine Leave must, within two days, obtain an order from the LHA that supports a need for continued Quarantine Leave.

Employees on Quarantine Leave may be eligible for worker's compensation benefits and/or protection pursuant to the Family Medical Leave Act. Employees should contact Human Resources for additional information. Payments to employees under this Policy are subject to recoupment to the County by the employee in the event a determination is made that an employee received compensation from more than one source.

An order issued pursuant to this policy is effective until the individual is no longer infected with a communicable disease or, in the case of possible

exposure, expiration of the usual incubation period for the disease, unless extended by the LHA based on individual circumstances.

Quarantine Leave shall not exceed eighty (80) hours without additional review by the LHA or designee.

#### **IV. ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES**

- A. This policy will be implemented and administered collaboratively by the impacted departments, Public Health, Human Resources, the Auditor's Office, Budget and Risk Management, and the County Administrator's Office.
- B. All departments that have an employee subject to this Quarantine and Isolation Policy must comply with all policies, procedures, and guidelines.
- C. The Commissioners Court, as the policy making authority, may amend this policy as needed.

Adopted: September 7, 2021 retroactively to June 15, 2021 via Court Order No. 136236

Amended: September 14, 2021 via Court Order No. 136324

Amended: October 11, 2022