16.0 SAFETY, RISK MANAGEMENT & LOSS PREVENTION

16.01 GENERAL SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT

McLennan County is committed to providing a safe workplace for our employees. Each County employee must adhere to the general safety standards established for all employees as well as comply with their departmental/office safety requirements. Safety procedures may differ at each County department or office. The supervisory authority will provide the employee with specific information pertaining to the employee’s position. Failure to follow the safety standards set by the County or department/office subjects an employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Employees seeing unsafe working conditions shall either take steps to correct those conditions or report the unsafe conditions to their superior.

16.02 SAFETY RULES OF GENERAL APPLICABILITY

The following rules are designed to promote the safety and wellbeing of County employees and are to be observed by employees at all times:

- No employees may engage in horseplay, wrestling, or practical joking while on duty or operating County equipment;
- Employees should maintain awareness of potential dangerous situations that may cause injury or illness to themselves, fellow employees, or the public;
- If a severe or life-threatening injury occurs, immediately call 911;
- Employees must report immediately to their supervisory authorities any conditions that, in their judgment, threaten the health or safety of employees or the public;
- An employee who is unable to perform his or her duties safely due to illness or injury must promptly notify his or her supervisor. Employees must immediately seek proper first aid treatment for all on-the-job injuries and illnesses and report these injuries and illnesses to their supervisor unless emergency circumstances exist;
- Employees shall not turn on, use, repair or operate any vehicle, crane, electricity, gas, steam, air, acid, caustic or other dangerous material or equipment unless qualified, and authorized by a supervisory authority;
- Only tools, equipment, machines, etc. that are properly maintained and adjusted may be used;
- Safety guards and safety devices on equipment shall not be disabled or removed;
- Floors must be kept free of any material or substance that might constitute a tripping or slipping hazard. Employees responsible for any such material or substance spilled shall clean it up immediately;
- Any employee involved in an incident that damages County property or injures them or others are subject to a drug and alcohol test;
- Offices should be arranged in a manner to provide unobstructed, safe movement of employees;
- Floors and carpeting shall be maintained in a safe condition;
• Walkways shall be free of potential tripping hazards such as waste baskets, phone cords, boxes, etc.;
• File drawers should be closed when not in use;
• File cabinets and shelves should be properly secured to prevent tipping over;
• Exposed wiring, outlets, and switches shall be covered to prevent contact;
• Water heater pipes should be insulated to prevent contact burns;
• Desks, boxes, chairs, and other items should not be used in place of ladders;
• Chairs should be maintained in a safe condition;
• Storage areas should be arranged to reduce injuries associated with material handling;
• Do not work under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or a prescription drug that limits your ability to re-act or mentally function;
• Do not text and drive;
• Follow manufacturer instructions and safety recommendations in the use of equipment.

16.03 LIFTING AND MANUAL MATERIAL HANDLING SAFETY

Lifting and material handling type injuries make up a major portion of risk for employee injury. To reduce the risk of this type injury, employees must follow the lifting guidelines to protect themselves from injury:

• When available use mechanical assistance if you are trained in using the lifting equipment.
• If mechanical assistance is unavailable, use team lifting if you are unable to lift item on your own.
• Twisting and jerking movements should be avoided; turn the body as a whole and not at the waist.
• Employees who will be lifting objects on the job should keep themselves in good physical condition. If you are going to be lifting objects that are heavy, or lifting for a prolonged period, take time to do some stretching and warm up exercise prior to starting the job. Studies have shown that this can have a dramatic effect on reducing injuries of this type.
• Use common sense—do not try to lift something that you cannot safely lift by yourself

16.04 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

If an employee believes he/she has been exposed to a communicable disease while performing job duties, they must report this immediately to their supervisory authority and to the County’s Worker’s Compensation Coordinator. If exposure is through a blood borne pathogen, reporting should be conducted in accordance with the County’s Blood Borne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan provided in the McLennan County Safety Policy Guide. Post-exposure medical evaluation and follow-up, including an option to be tested will be provided. Hepatitis B vaccinations are made available at the County’s cost to custodial employees, law enforcement and corrections officers, civilian jail personnel having contact with inmates, and jail medical personnel. For further information consult the Blood Borne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan in the McLennan County Safety Policy Guide.

Communicable diseases are spread via airborne viruses or bacteria or contact with human blood or other bodily fluids. In addition to viruses and bacteria, communicable disease pathogens include fungi
and parasites. Persons who know or who have reason to believe they are infected with a reportable communicable disease have an obligation to conduct themselves in accordance with such knowledge in order to protect themselves and others. Avoid physical contact, wash hands frequently, cover mouth/nose when coughing/sneezing, cover open sores/wounds and avoid the workplace if you are feverish. If a position has a higher risk of exposure, use protective equipment such as masks, gloves, eyewear, etc. Refer to Personal Protective Equipment for more details. If you have a communicable disease that poses an unreasonable risk of infection to other employees and that risk cannot be adequately mitigated by reasonable accommodation, you may be re-assigned or separated from employment.

16.05 FIRE

Employees can assist in minimizing the risk of fires by being aware of potential fire hazards. Below are preventive measures that can be taken by all employees:

- Clear passageways shall be maintained to fire extinguishers and exits;
- Oily rags, waste, etc. shall be disposed of in metal cans with covers;
- Precautions against fire and explosions shall be taken where flammables with a low flash point are stored or used. Some common hazardous liquids are gasoline, paint, paint thinners, and solvents;
- Spilled flammable liquids should be cleaned up immediately;
- Gasoline and other flammable liquids should be stored in department approved safety containers and away from ignition sources;
- Combustible storage should be minimized;
- Do not check for gas leaks using an open flame. Use approved gas indicators. Report all gas leaks to your immediate supervisory authority;
- Employees should know the location of fire extinguishers at their reporting facilities and how to properly operate them;
- Fire extinguishers shall be readily accessible and not mounted in an area of likely immediate danger;
- Do not attempt to fight a fire unless it is small and controllable. Never place yourself or others in unnecessary danger. Make sure everyone in the area is aware of a fire;
- If a fire is not small or controllable, evacuate to safety first then call the fire department.

16.06 EVACUATION PLANS

McLennan County Elected Officials, Appointed Officials and Department Heads are encouraged to formulate an evacuation plan for their respective building(s). Below are some guidelines that will assist to ensure the continued safety of our employees and visitors when evacuating County buildings. The guidelines should not be considered all encompassing. A practical approach should be utilized when instituting evacuation procedures. Basic rules include:

- Elevators should not be used during evacuation procedures;
- Upon activation of fire alarm(s), evacuation procedures should commence in an orderly manner;
- Do not lock any doors, as this will hamper firefighting and/or rescue efforts;
• Evacuation routes should be clearly signed and evacuation plans should be reviewed by all employees;
• Contact the local fire marshal or fire department with regard to assistance they are able to provide in establishing evacuation plans;
• Comply with all state laws and local ordinances with regard to evacuation plans, including posting requirements, signage, and lighting;
• Conduct periodic fire drills or evacuation drills—coordination involved the local fire department, Sheriff’s Office, Emergency Management Office and other personnel involved in risk management;
• A rendezvous point away from the evacuated building should be established to account for all employee and visitors;
• Allow no one to return to the evacuated facility until proper authority from the fire department, sheriff’s office, or police dept. has given the all clear.

16.07 PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Employees are required to wear personal protective equipment if their position entails hazards that place the employee at high risk for injury. Refer to your supervisory authority and your job description for instructions on what type of protection equipment is required for your position. Follow the guidelines for protective equipment below:

• All personnel working in or visiting a work area, which requires personal protective equipment, shall wear or use the required items while in the area;
• The person in charge of each operation shall see that the specific safety equipment needed on the particular job is available and used;
• All safety items issued shall be maintained in clean and serviceable condition. Any unserviceable items shall be reported to the immediate superior, not used, and replaced as soon as possible;
• Protective wear, after being used by one employee, shall be cleaned and disinfected before being used by another employee;
• Provision of protective clothing and equipment is a temporary measure. Every effort shall be made to correct the hazard through administration, engineering, or other methods.

16.08 SEATBELTS

In order to protect the safety of employees, all employees operating County vehicles along with any passengers are required to wear seatbelts. This policy is also mandatory for employees and their passengers riding in personal vehicles while engaged in County business.

16.09 SECURITY AND LOSS PREVENTION

McLennan County is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for its employees, visitors, customers and other assets including County equipment and machinery. Each employee is responsible for being vigilant in reporting any suspicious activity to the McLennan County Sheriff’s Office and/or the Courthouse Security. Be mindful and abide by security protocols of facilities that are locked down and require either secured key access or physical barriers for security checkpoints.
Every employee is responsible for maintaining the security and safety of our building facilities, records and systems. Every employee is responsible for helping to make this a secure work environment. Upon leaving work, lock all desks, lockers, and doors protecting valuable or sensitive material in your work area and report any lost or stolen keys, passes, or other similar devices to your superior immediately. You should refrain from discussing with nonemployees specifics regarding County security systems, alarms, passwords, etc. Lending keys or keycards to County buildings, equipment or property to unauthorized persons is prohibited.

Do not hesitate to report any suspicious observations or ask questions. If you see something, say something

16.10 FINANCIAL LOSS PREVENTION AND RISK MANAGEMENT

The County is entrusted with tax revenues and other public funds necessary to provide public services. The protection of County funds, financial accounts, and financial information is of great importance. If you suspect misappropriation, theft or fraud, immediately report it to your supervisory authority or department head/official. If you are not comfortable reporting it within your department or office—report it to the County Auditor or to Human Resources. If the County Auditor or the County’s independent audit firm identifies to a department or office financial controls that need to be put in place, those controls must promptly be implemented by the department or office.