

SECTION 12

PERSONNEL RECORDS AND PRIVACY

A. Personnel Records

Personnel records containing information on each County employee will be maintained to document employment-related decisions, evaluate and assess policies, comply with state and federal government recordkeeping and reporting requirements, and to assure efficient personnel administration. Following is a list of personnel materials that should be kept in personnel files:

- Original application for employment/resume;
- Letters of commendation;
- Disciplinary letters, forms, notes etc.;
- Employee History (Cost of living Increases, Step increases, Promotions/Transfers);
- Orientation Checklist;
- Public Access Authorization Form

Note: No medical documentation should be kept in the personnel files.

B. Notification of Changes. Changes of name, address, telephone number and family status (births, marriage, death, divorce, legal separation, etc.), beneficiary designations must be reported immediately to the Human Resources, Auditing and Risk Management Departments, as an employee's income tax status and group insurance may be affected by these changes. *All such changes must be made within thirty (30) days of the event. This responsibility includes employees on leave of absence.* In addition, employees who have a change in dependents or marital status must complete a new Form W-4 for income tax withholding purposes within ten days of the change, if it results in a decrease in the number of dependents.

C. Files Access. Access to personnel files is restricted to authorized employees of the Human Resources and Auditing departments and supervisors on a "need to know" basis and as required by the Open Records Act. Public inspection of your personnel records is permitted in accordance with the Texas Open Records Act. The Act permits you to choose to withhold from disclosure your social security number, number of family members, home address, and home telephone number. Personnel files are the property of the County and may not be removed from County premises. Employees may inspect their own personnel records and may copy, but may not remove, documents in the file.

If you want this information to be confidential, complete Attachment A "Jefferson County Public Authorization Form". Check the first box if you have no objection to disclosure, check the second box if you do object.

D. Information Requests and Employment References. Requests for information from employee files received from other departments and inquiries from outside the County, including requests for references on former employees, should be directed to the Human Resources or Auditing Departments. Supervisors and other employees are prohibited from providing personal or employment references on ex-employees or current employees. The following information will be verified by telephone (after a reasonable caller identification) or in writing:

- Date of hire and date of separation;
- Job title(s);
- Confirmation of salary