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Procedure Summary

Texas A&M University-Texarkana (A&M-Texarkana) Wellness Release Time Program is designed to enhance the well-being of employees. It is a voluntary program designed to encourage employees to participate in physical fitness activities and wellness education opportunities.

These voluntary programs are designed to improve overall well-being, encourage employees to adopt healthy behaviors and positive lifestyles, improve job performance, increase engagement and work satisfaction and reduce health care expenditures and insurance premiums.

This procedure outlines the parameters of the Wellness Release Time Program and describes the application and monitoring process.

Procedures and Responsibilities

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 The Wellness Release Time Program provides full-time, benefits-eligible employees 30 minutes during normal work hours up to three (3) times a week of release time for participation in physical exercise and fitness activities.
- 1.2 Participation in wellness release time may occur on- or off-campus, through activities sponsored by the Employee Wellness Program, or by utilizing campus fitness resources, or other fitness activities as approved by the employee's immediate supervisor.
- 1.3 Supervisors may require verification of participation at any time.
- 1.4 Employees participating in the Wellness Release Time Program must submit an application attesting to a physical exam performed by a licensed physician and/or participation in a university-sponsored health screening within the past twelve months (see *Wellness Release Time Application*).

- 1.5 When feasible, wellness release time should be taken in conjunction with the start or end of the work day or in addition to the lunch break. The employee must specify the weekday(s) and time(s) of the wellness activities.
- 1.6 Wellness release time is paid time which does not have to be made up, cannot be accrued, and does not need to be documented on timesheets.
- 1.7 Wellness release time is not considered work time for purposes of Workers' Compensation. Injuries that may result during participation will not be treated as work-related injuries.
- 1.8 Each academic year (September 1 through August 31) of participation, employees must secure approval from their immediate supervisor prior to participation in the program using the *Wellness Release Time Application*. The application must be resubmitted if the employee has a job change during the year that results in a new supervisor or changes to their work schedule.
- 1.9 Immediate supervisors are expected to make reasonable efforts to accommodate requests for participation in the Wellness Release Time Program. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure each employee has access to this program and the operations and service levels of the department are maintained while wellness release time is taken.
- 1.10 Participation in the Wellness Release Time Program may be disapproved if the operation of the department will be negatively impacted by the employee's absence, if the employee's current performance rating does not meet expectations, or if the employee has a current documented performance improvement plan. If an application is denied, the supervisor must indicate the reason(s) for denial.
- 1.11 Abuse of the privilege to participate in the Wellness Release Time Program will subject the employee to revocation of the privilege and/or disciplinary action.

2. APPLICATION AND MONITORING PROCEDURES

- 2.1 To apply for participation in the Wellness Release Time Program, the employee must complete a *Wellness Release Time Application* and submit it to his/her immediate supervisor. The application must specify the requested weekday(s) and time(s) of wellness activities.
- 2.2 If the application is approved by the supervisor, the employee will submit the approved application to the *Wellness Program Administrator*.
- 2.3 Employees are responsible for monitoring their usage of wellness release time and ensuring compliance with program guidelines. However, supervisors have the right to

request records of employee utilization of the Wellness Release Time Program to verify hours of involvement.

- 2.4 A&M-Texarkana may support the Wellness Release Time Program by supplementing participating employee membership costs to the Patterson Student Center, depending on funding. Memberships are available to employees who participate in the Wellness Release Time Program at a discounted rate; however, membership to the Patterson Student Center is not required to participate in the Wellness Release Time Program.
- 2.5 Any exceptions or deviations from the approved schedule must be approved in writing by the employee's immediate supervisor.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

[Texas Government Code Chapter 664, *State Employees Health Fitness and Education*](#)

[System Regulation 31.02.13, *Wellness Programs*](#)

Appendix

[*Wellness Release Time Application*](#)

Contact Office

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