



DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY
Electronic Timekeeping Policy

HPW A.P. 2-4
Effective Date: Upon Approval
Rescinds Departmental Policy No. 1-30

1. PURPOSE

To provide Houston Public Works (HPW) employees with the amended policy and procedures applicable to electronic timekeeping.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all HPW employees and supersedes any other former Departmental policy, procedure, directive, or attachment.

3. POLICY

In compliance with City of Houston Administrative Policy 2-4, **Electronic Timekeeping Policy, approved December 18, 2023**, HPW will follow the stated guidelines and procedures as outlined in the attached Administrative Policy 2-4 approved by the Mayor.

4. COMPLIANCE

Adherence to the attached Administrative Policy is mandatory. Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to the disciplinary actions outlined in Administrative Policy 2-4.

5. ATTACHMENTS/LINKS

Link to the City's A.P. 2-4 Electronic Timekeeping Policy:

<https://www.houstontx.gov/adminpolicies/2-4.pdf>

Link to the City's Administrative Policies:

https://www.houstontx.gov/policies/administrative_policies.html

APPROVED:

DocuSigned by:
Carol Haddock
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DATE APPROVED:

1/18/2024



Administrative Policy
Electronic Timekeeping Policy

A.P. No.

A.P 2-4

Effective Date:

Upon Approval

1. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the City of Houston to allow employees to use an electronic time system.

2. POLICY PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to City employees and supervisors regarding use of the electronic time system.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all civilian employees, including those in the Houston Fire Department (HFD) and Houston Police Department (HPD).

4. DEFINITIONS

Buddy Punching: When someone modifies their own, or has another person modify their or another person's timecard, whether electronically or manually. Such action may include punching into the electronic time system for an employee who is not at work at that time.

Exempt Employees: All employees of the City of Houston who are exempted from the overtime compensation requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 and the pertinent regulations and opinions interpreting that Act. and who have been designated as such by the Human Resources Department and the Civil Service Commission.

Geofencing: The use of GPS and RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) technology to create geographic areas and boundaries to trigger an alert when a person or device enters a demarcated area or boundary.

GPS: Global Positioning System (GPS): A satellite-based navigational system that transmits and determines a person's or object's geographical location..

Holiday: A date that City Council has declared as a City holiday.

Non-exempt Employee: All employees who are not exempt (see "exempt employee" above) and are so designated by job classification.

Overtime: Any hours worked during a work week in excess of 40 hours actually worked on paid leave or observing an official City Holiday.

Positive Pay: Pay an employee receives as have actually worked, as evidenced by the time clocked with the system.

Riding the Clock: Term used for an employee who has begun the shift but who is not working and/or is spending an excessive amount of time on personal or other non-working related matters.

Approved:

Date Approved:

12/18/2023

Page 1 of 5

Stealing Time: Receiving pay for time not actually worked. Examples might include but are not limited to: clocking in before arriving to work; leaving work and clocking out remotely; altering or requesting time records to be altered such that compensation will be paid when not at the work location; buddy punching, riding the clock, or conducting outside employment while on the clock for the City. This definition does not generally apply to an employee who is at work but unproductive.

5. POLICY DETAILS

- 5.1. All non-exempt employees are required to clock in before performing any work.
- 5.2. Non-exempt employees are prohibited from performing any work after clocking out.
- 5.3. Forgetting to clock in and out is not a legitimate reason for working off the clock.
- 5.4. Intentional or careless working off the clock is prohibited.
- 5.5. Employees who underreport or fail to report hours worked are subject to corrective action.
- 5.6. Supervisors, at any level, who knowingly allow employees to underreport or fail to report hours worked by employees will also be subject to corrective action.
- 5.7. The only person who may punch in or out for the employee is the individual employee, unless there was a time clock malfunction, network problem of the electronic time clock system or accidental oversight by the employee and then section 5.8 of this policy will prevail.
 - 5.7.1. Using someone else's card or punching in for someone else is considered, at minimum, to be theft of City time and/or falsification of a government record.
- 5.8. If an employee is unable to punch in or out because of a time clock malfunction, network problem, or accidental oversight by the employee, it is the employee's responsibility to inform the appropriate supervisor or timekeeper in writing for the appropriate action to record the employee's time worked.
- 5.9. Once an employee has clocked in, he/she shall begin work.
- 5.10. "Riding the clock" is considered not working and is grounds for corrective action.
- 5.11. Any overtime work must be approved by an employee's supervisor before overtime hours are performed and must be:
 - 5.11.1. Approved by an employee's supervisor before overtime hours are worked;
 - 5.11.2. Carefully monitored by a supervisor; and
 - 5.11.3. Shown as reviewed by the supervisor in the electronic time clock system to indicate approval.
- 5.12. Before authorizing overtime, the supervisor is responsible for verifying that funds are budgeted and available.
- 5.13. All leave requests such as vacation, sick, personal, floating or accrued holiday(s), etc. must be submitted through the electronic time clock system, by the employee, supervisor or other appropriate person (i.e., timekeeper, payroll representative, etc.).
- 5.14. Records supporting Jury Duty, FMLA, Medical Leave, etc. should be given to the direct supervisor and denoted in the electronic time clock system appropriately.
- 5.15. All civilian employees shall review and approve their electronic timesheets before the payroll due date

via electronic time clock system.

- 5.16. The electronic time clock system has the capability of providing employees, supervisors and managers with various reports, including those that show irregularities, problems or abuses of the system.
- 5.17. During an audit, various reports and records shall be reviewed to reconcile the electronic time clock system's data.
- 5.18. Falsification, tampering, unauthorized viewing, and other attempts to manipulate the electronic time clock system is strictly prohibited.
- 5.19. Corrective action, up to and including indefinite suspension or termination, may result for engaging in any of the following conduct:
 - 5.19.1. Any attempt to tamper with the electronic time system software or hardware;
 - 5.19.2. Buddy Punching;
 - 5.19.3. Punching in or out remotely using the electronic time system's mobile application without prior authorization;
 - 5.19.4. Punching in using the electronic time system's mobile application before you arrive at your work location;
 - 5.19.5. Leaving your work location/area before the end of your shift and punching out using the electronic time system's mobile application from an unauthorized location;
 - 5.19.6. Interfering with other employees' use of the electronic time system;
 - 5.19.7. Unauthorized viewing of another employee's time in the electronic time system; and
 - 5.19.8. Any and all other attempts to defraud, steal time, or otherwise lie, cheat for oneself or any other person or employee, regardless of whether that person is identified.
- 5.20. Payroll will run based off data from the electronic time clock system and shall not be delayed due to an employee's or supervisor's failure to ensure the electronic time clock system data was accurate for an employee's time records.
- 5.21. Only full-time employees are authorized to approve time records for employees in the electronic time clock system.
- 5.22. Supervisors may delegate their authority in the electronic time clock system to any other supervisor (assigned a manager license) within their own department during times of absence (i.e., vacation, sick, FMLA, etc.).
 - 5.22.1. Delegation of authority shall be limited to a maximum of 30 days or no longer than the expected extended absence of the supervisor.
- 5.23. No employee shall use another employee's credentials to the electronic time clock system for clocking in, out or approving any leave requests or time records.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1. Administration and Regulatory Affairs Department's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
 - 6.1.1. Closing the pay period according to a preset schedule to ensure that time adjustments and

leave taken are properly recorded;

- 6.1.2. Relying on supervisors and timekeepers to resolve all missed punches or shifts, leave taken, holidays, etc. and to approve each employee's time records within scheduled deadlines;
- 6.1.3. Notifying supervisors of any missed punches or pay leaves prior to the close of each pay period;
- 6.1.4. Identifying and reviewing all irregularities with time records and/or patterns with the appropriate supervisor and/or timekeepers.

6.2. Supervisors and/or timekeepers responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- 6.2.1. Reviewing, approving and reconciling time records at the end of each payroll period; and
- 6.2.2. Authorizing overtime, prior to the employee beginning to work overtime, based on the needs of the business operations and verifying that funds are budgeted for overtime and available.

6.3. Employees responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- 6.3.1. Acknowledging receipt of this policy via Attachment A, which shall be filed in the employee's official personnel file maintained by the Human Resources Department; and
- 6.3.2. Complying with department policies and procedures regarding the use of an electronic time clock system.

7. PROCEDURES

7.1. As determined by the department director, an employee may be authorized to clock in and out (1) at a computer, (2) using the Mobile Timekeeping Application and/or (3) at a time clock, if available.

- 7.1.1. With approval, under certain conditions (e.g., training at an off-site location, off-site for City Business, etc.) employees may 1) report time worked to their supervisor or timekeeper in writing; 2) use on-site time clocks; or 3) make use of the electronic time system's mobile application.

7.2. As a default, clock in and out times are rounded as follows:

- 7.2.1. Clock in and clock out punches will be rounded to the nearest 15 minutes.
 - 7.2.1.1. This rounding is not intended to authorize employees to arrive late or leave early.
 - 7.2.1.2. Tardiness and punctuality will be addressed by actual punch time and not the rounded punch time.
- 7.2.2. Meal breaks will be rounded to the nearest 15 minutes (the system rounds the time period, not the punch).
- 7.2.3. Some departments may have minor variations of the above rounding policies as documented by an internal department specific policy.
- 7.2.4. Employees are expected to work their scheduled amount of hours daily.

7.3. Employees shall have until 4 p.m. on the fifth calendar day from the date payroll closes to file a dispute, in writing with their immediate supervisor.

7.3.1. The dispute shall be properly documented by the supervisor, signed by both parties, and submitted for filing in the employee's department file.

7.3.1.1. If the employee refuses to sign the documentation, the supervisor should note this accordingly in the paperwork.

7.3.2. If the dispute cannot be resolved by the use a security camera footage, other evidence will be considered, such as security entrance records, City computer login records, the IP address of each clock transaction, witnesses, computer work, employee badge swipes, etc.

7.4. Department directors shall review the specific details of all timekeeping violations and impose the appropriate corrective action.

7.5. Any employee who becomes aware of any alleged violations of this policy shall report the alleged violations to their immediate supervisor, manager, Human Resources Department Employee Relations liaison or the Office of the Inspector General.

8. CONFLICT AND REPEAL

8.1. This Administrative Procedure supersedes Administrative Procedure 2-4, Electronic Timekeeping Policy, dated February 22, 2012, which shall be of no further force or effect.

8.2. If the provisions of this policy conflict with any law that law shall prevail.

9. POLICY SPONSOR

Department: Administration and Regulatory Affairs Department