

## **31.02.13.W1.99 Wellness Release Time**

Approved January 1, 2022

Next Scheduled Review: January 1, 2026

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### **Procedure Summary**

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The West Texas A&M University Employee Wellness Program is designed to enhance the well-being of employees and reduce lifestyle-related issues that affect the employee's health and work productivity. It is a voluntary program consisting of university-sponsored physical fitness activities and open recreation opportunities during the workday.

The objective of the Employee Wellness Program is to provide a supportive environment that encourages employees to adopt healthy behaviors and positive lifestyle changes, improves job performance, increases work satisfaction, cultivates work/life balance, and reduces health care/insurance costs.

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### **Procedures and Responsibilities**

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#### **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. University employees have access to facilities including the Virgil Henson Activities Center (with paid membership), including the swimming pool, racquetball courts, bowling alley, as well as university walking areas. Other fitness activities as approved by the employee's immediate supervisor are also permissible. All Wellness Release Time is expected to occur on campus.
- 1.2 Employees participating in the Wellness Release Time program should have had a physician physical within the past 12 months.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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.

- 1.5 Each academic year (starting September 1) of participation, employees must submit a completed application form with approval from immediate supervisors prior to participation in the program using the Wellness Release Time application (see Appendix A). All Wellness Release Time applications will expire on August 31 of the following year.
- 1.6 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 procedure, and that the workflow and operation of the department continues effectively while Wellness Release Time is taken.

## 2. APPLICATION AND MONITORING PROCEDURES

- 2.1 To apply for participation in the Wellness Release Time program, the employee submits a completed application (see Appendix A) to his or her immediate supervisor. The supervisor and employee agree on a set schedule of Wellness Release Time, which is intended to be flexible and may change throughout the academic year. Any revisions from the approved schedule must be discussed in advance with the immediate supervisor. Resubmission of the application within the academic year of usage is not necessary.
- 2.2 The employee submits the signed and approved original application to Human Resources.
- 2.3 Employees are responsible for monitoring their own usage of Wellness Release Time and ensuring compliance with program guidelines. Supervisors may request to verify hours of involvement for an employee that utilizes the Virgil Henson Activities Center or Employee Wellness Program sponsored classes.
- 2.4 The President of West Texas A&M University supports Wellness Release Time by offering reduced membership costs to the Virgil Henson Activities Center. Memberships are available to employees at a discounted rate; however, membership to the Virgil Henson Activities Center is not required to use Wellness Release Time. Payroll deduction is available for memberships each August for the following fiscal year. The reduced rate membership costs are listed below:

### Texas A&M University System Employee

<b>Term</b>	<b>Individual</b>	<b>Family</b>
<b>Annual</b>	\$150	\$225
<b>Semester</b>	\$60	\$90
<b>Month</b>	\$18	\$27

- 2.5 Abuse of the privilege to participate in the Wellness Release Time Program may result in revoking the employee's participation in the program and/or disciplinary action. Supervisors have the right to review records of employees' utilization of the Virgil Henson Activities Center and other programs or activities to verify hours of involvement.
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## **Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements**

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Texas Government Code Ch. 664 [\*State Employees Health Fitness and Education\*](#)

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

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## **Appendixes**

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Appendix A [\*West Texas A&M University Wellness Release Time Application\*](#)

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## **Contact Office**

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