

POLK COUNTY  
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE  
PRECINCT TWO

## OFFICE POLICY

The Court will be courteous to everyone who comes into the office, and try to help them understand the process of what the Justice Court does, and is responsible for. If the Court cannot help them, direct them to the correct office or entity. **THE JUSTICE COURT DOES NOT GIVE OUT LEGAL ADVICE. WE ARE ALLOWED BY LAW TO ONLY GIVE OUT PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE.**

**CHAIN OF COMMAND:** Court Clerk, Chief Court Clerk, Judge

**WORK HOURS:** The Justice Court office hours are Monday through Friday 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM. The Court is closed only during the Holiday Hours Approved by Commissioners Court ( See current Holiday hours on County website). Be timely to work. You are to have your computer on, and ready when the office opens to the public. If an employee is going to be absent or late to work, contact the Judge immediately. If possible, call the night before. Make sure that you as an employee have your co-workers, and Judge's current phone numbers.

**DRESS CODE:** Casual attire is allowed on non court dates. Business Attire on Criminal and Civil Court Dates. Jeans are allowed on Non-Court dates. Jeans with distress or holes are prohibited in the office. Shirts and jeans are to be worn properly and not to reveal anything if you are to bend over, raise your arms, squat, or sit.

**CELL PHONE USE:** Personal phone calls are to be limited to break time only. *THERE ARE NO PERSONAL PHONE CALLS WHILE ASSISTING THE PUBLIC.* Should you be on your personal phone and someone appears at the window, the personal phone call is to be terminated immediately. During busy times, a message will be taken and you can make a return phone call once you have completed your work with the public. \*\*

**INTERNET:** Court business is to be done first and foremost before any down time. Should be kept limited and professional. While I know there is some down time at times, I ask that you keep surfing the internet to a minimum. \*\*

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE PUBLIC:** Acknowledge everyone that approaches the window. If you are unable to help them, let them know immediately and where they can turn to for help. We are to treat everyone with the utmost respect, and courteousness.

**ANSWERING THE PHONE:** Do not wait for someone else to answer the phone. Phones are to be answered in a timely manner. All calls are to be answered in a courteous voice. If you take a call, and are unsure how to answer the question or how to respond, place the call on hold and seek the answer. **DO NOT GIVE OUT INFORMATION UNLESS YOU ARE 100 PERCENT SURE THE INFORMATION YOU ARE GIVING IS CORRECT.**

**LISTEN AND LEARN:** Be aware of what is going on in the office, if a question arises, be informed. Learn from the question asked, and answered. Take notes, you can never learn enough.

**GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES:** Responsibilities To be shared by office staff include:

1. Opening and Closing the office
2. Make sure petty cash is put away in the safe and the safe locked nightly
3. Cleaning the office
4. Turning off lights
5. Re-stocking
6. Opening and processing all mail first thing in the morning before any other work is done
7. DPS downloads are to be done after mail is complete
8. Citations are to be entered and scanned daily \*\*
9. Make sure all doors are locked and secured prior to leaving at lunch and 4:30pm
10. Make sure the fax machine is checked in the morning and before you leave for the day and the fax is put in the proper box, or on the proper desk.

**OFFICE SAFETY:** You are to keep the hallway, and back doors locked at all times. Courtrooms doors are to stay locked, unless Court is in session. Court is open to the public, unless it pertains to Juveniles.

**TIME OFF:** Each employee is responsible for keeping up with their accrued sick, vacation and personal time off.

Doctor Appointments: If possible, schedule on Monday or Friday

Vacation / Personal Time: Minimum 2 week notice

Sick Leave: Contact the Judge before 7:00am if possible

I ask that you do not take off on scheduled Court Dates, and the week I am on call. However, I do understand that at times it does not work out that way. I ask that you are considerate of your co-workers and this office. \*\*

**COMP TIME:** Only to be approved by the Judge

**TASK PERFORMANCE:** Research your question through the training center website, if you're unable to find the answer, turn to the Justice Court Deskbooks. If you are still unsure of the answer, ask the chain of command. This will eliminate errors, and help you better understand the job. Update your notes in the note binders when things change.

**TAKING INITIATIVE:** All employees are to take the initiative to stay busy, and have work done in a timely manner. If you see something that needs to be done, do it. It does not have to be your general responsibility, but this will help the Court to be more productive and organized.

**RESEARCH:** If you have a question, research before assuming, or asking a question. Log onto the Texas Justice Court Training Center website, look up the law. Once you have found the answer, share with each other what you have found. If you research on the TJCTC website, and look at the law and are still not sure, ask, and we will research together to find the answer. Make a note of it in your notes binder.

**PETTY CASH:** Petty Cash is to be counted prior to daily deposits. Petty cash is to be locked in the safe, and the safe locked nightly before leaving.

**DEPOSITS:** Money is to be deposited at First State Bank daily. One employee is to count the money, another is to take the money to the bank. At no time should the same employee count and deposit money.\*\*

**SUPPLIES:** Make sure your workstation has sufficient supplies and that all ink pads are properly inked and printer cartridges are high on the quantity of ink.

**DAILY WORK:** Make sure that work is done diligently and correctly. Mistakes do happen, make sure repetitive mistakes do not happen on a regular basis. \*\*

**OFFICE FORMS:** If there is a change that needs to be made to an office form, prior to making the change, notify the Judge.

**OFFICE APPEARANCE:** It is the responsibility of everyone in the office to keep the office looking neat and clean. You are expected to keep the storage rooms, files, and office in a professional manner.

**CIVIL / CRIMINAL FILINGS:** ALL new cases filed or downloads in the Court will be entered, citations scanned and filed away in the proper drawer the day they are filed with the Court. Do not let cases pile up. Every employee has been cross trained and has typed instructions on how to enter civil and criminal cases. If there is an abundance of cases or downloads, to be filed, share the workload. \*\*

**ORDERING SUPPLIES:** Check with all office staff and judge prior to making an order.

**INCOMPLETE PAPERWORK:** If someone brings in incomplete paperwork to file with the Courts you are to do the following:

1. Notify them of what they have missed, and give them the paperwork back to correct
2. If they refuse to correct the paperwork, file what they have given you and make note in the file so that the Judge is aware that you have already attempted to have them correct it

**NOTE TAKING:** When anything is filed that pertains to a case, make note on the front of the file, and file the paperwork with the case.

**MONTHLY REPORTS:** Are to be done on the first business day of each month

**UPDATED DEFENDANT INFORMATION:** If you learn of new information on a defendant, make note on the file and in PID immediately. This includes phone numbers, address, death.\*\*

**SOCIAL MEDIA:** You as an employee of the Justice Court are to maintain high standards of Judicial and Personal Conduct at all times. Employees who use social media and social networking services and tools for strictly personal use outside of the workplace do not require approval to do so. However, these types of tools can sometimes blur the line between professional and personal lives and interactions with the public. Therefore, employees are reminded that as a representative of the Justice Court, you are to hold the integrity, and professionalism of this Court during and after

work hours. Any activity using Government equipment (including access to the internet) is governed by the Polk County IT Department and personal use of Government Office Equipment and any internet usage is subject to Public Inspection.

**END OF THE YEAR FILING:** The last day of each year, all closed cases are to be filed, and scanned in.\*\*

**COUNTY POLICY:** All policies issued by the Polk County Commissioners Court are to be upheld. You are to read and understand fully the County Policies.

**REPRIMANDS:** Are to be carried over from year to year, regardless of change in the judicial seat.

**Disciplinary Actions:**

- 1. Verbal Warning
- 2. Written Warning
- 3. Time Off / Termination ( to be seen at Judge’s discretion)

Interoffice policies are effective on the date of signatures below.

X \_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

X \_\_\_\_\_  
Judge Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date