



CITY OF WATAUGA – PERSONNEL, ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

POLICY TITLE	Probation Period
INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE	07/27/2015
LAST REVISION DATE	Replaces <i>Section 6.1</i> of the Personnel, Administration and Financial Policies and Procedures Manual approved on February 24, 2014.
POLICY NUMBER	3.03

OBJECTIVE Every individual appointed to a regular position (full-time and part-time) in the City or promoted in service of the City shall be required to successfully complete a probationary period. During the probationary period, the supervisor shall closely observe and evaluate the work of all new employees and encourage their effective adjustment to the position by providing necessary training, coaching, and orientation in order to determine the suitability of continued employment.

SCOPE This policy applies to all regular full-time and part time employees of the City of Watauga. Police Officers and Fire Fighters are subject to the applicable provisions of Texas Local Government Code Chapter 143, the Rules of the City of Watauga Firefighters and Police Officers Civil Service Commission, and the general and special orders of the Police and Fire Departments, which may incorporate some or all of the provisions of this policy.

POLICY

A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to allow the employee's supervisor: 1) to train, instruct, review, and counsel the employee in the operations of the department, the expectations of the supervisor, and the performance level required and 2) to identify and correct inadequate performance.

The successful completion of a probationary period should not be construed as creating a contract of employment or as guaranteeing employment for any specific duration.

B. Probationary Period

- 1. Non Civil Service Employees:** Individuals initially appointed to the City or promoted within City service under a regular appointment must successfully complete a six (6) month probationary period.
- 2. Civil Service Employees:** A firefighter or police officer who is hired pursuant to Chapter 143 of the Local Government Code but who has not yet completed their entire

probationary period as defined in Section 143.027 of the Local government Code is governed by that statute, the rules of the City of Watauga Firefighters and Police Officers Civil Service Commission, any Meet and Confer Agreement that may be effective during the time of their employment with the City of Watauga, and the respective department policies. Civil Service employees are not governed by this policy.

3. **Temporary Employees:** Temporary employees do not serve a probationary period and have no appeal rights.

C. Procedure

1. Throughout the probationary period, the employee's supervisor should continually assess their performance to determine the suitability of continued employment. The supervisor should coach or counsel the employee on the supervisor's expectations of performance and behavior.
2. An employee will fail probation if, in the judgment of the Supervisor, and/or Department Head the employee's performance is unacceptable. A supervisor may release the employee from employment if the supervisor determines that the employee is not exhibiting the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful in the employee's position.
3. Failure of probation can occur at any time within the probationary period. The Supervisor and/or Department Heads are responsible for ensuring adequate documentation of all cases of failure of probation as well as coaching, counseling, training, and other efforts to assist employees improve their performance during their probationary period.
4. If an employee is absent for 15 working days or more during the probation period, the probationary period may be extended by the amount of time the employee was absent to be equivalent to six (6) months of performance.
5. If an employee is placed on a **Performance Improvement Plan** during the Probationary Period, the Probationary Period will end on the ending date of the Performance Improvement Plan or at the end of the original six (6) month probation period, whichever is the latter.
6. An employee who leaves a regular position with the City and is reemployed shall be considered a new employee and serve a six (6) month probationary period.
7. A promoted employee who does not successfully complete probation may return to their former position if it is available. Otherwise, the employee will be released from employment.
8. Newly hired and newly promoted employees generally are not eligible for promotion, lateral transfer, or voluntary demotion during the probationary period. Exceptions may be granted by the City Manager when such promotion, lateral transfer, or voluntary demotion is in the best interest of the City.

D. Military Employees

An employee who leaves a regular position with the City in order to actively serve in the United States armed forces shall be reemployed with the City of Watauga if the employee complies with all provisions of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

Time spent on military leave is not counted as time worked toward completing a probationary period (either initial probation or promotional probation). If an employee who has not completed their probationary period goes out on military leave, their probationary period is suspended for the duration of the leave and must be completed upon return from service.

E. Appeal

An employee who is released from employment during the initial probationary period does not have any right to appeal. This restriction also applies to an employee whose initial probationary period is extended pursuant to subsections C.4, C.5. and D. above.