



## Combat the Holiday Blues

As we transition from fall into winter, the days get shorter and colder. Suddenly the holiday season is upon us with all the expectations of the festivities yet to come. But to some this season brings the holiday blues. The holiday blues are those short-term feelings that individuals experience during the holidays, including sadness, painful reflection, loneliness, fatigue, disappointment, sluggishness, mental distress, or anxiety. Often these feelings are brought on by having great expectations of the holidays themselves, reminders of lost or estranged loved ones, difficult family dynamics, and sometimes financial burdens. The exhaustion that comes from hosting, traveling, or having a disruption to your normal daily schedule during the holidays can also be contributing factors.

Some of the symptoms can be very similar to those of clinical depression so it's important to keep track of how long you've been feeling low during the holidays. Depression involves low mood for most of the days for a period of two weeks or more and generally holiday blues will be shorter in duration and not as detrimental to your daily life. If you find it difficult to get out of bed, go to work or school, leave the house, spend time with others, or just accomplish small task or chores it may be time to check in with a healthcare provider.

If you feel you are suffering from the holiday blues, here are some ways to mitigate those feelings:

- Focus on getting at least 7 to 8 hours of good quality sleep nightly.
- Be mindful of the high fat and sugar foods, often served during the holidays and look for ways to eat a more balanced and nutritious diet.
- Avoid the consumption of alcohol as alcohol depresses your mood.
- Exercising more regularly (3-5 times/week) during the holidays can help improve the symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Discuss your feelings with close friends or relatives. They may also have similar feelings. Talking with others and expressing your feelings verbally is often very helpful.
- Find time daily just for yourself.

If you are struggling with your thoughts and feelings over the holidays, please reach out to your healthcare provider or call the City of Tulsa's Employee Assistance Program at 918-594-5232. They can provide free confidential visits for up to 5 sessions per diagnosis. Community Care provides all Employee Assistance Program services for employees and their family members.

If you are experiencing mental health crisis, call COPES at 918-744-4800 or the CrisisCare Center at 918-921-3200 which can be reached 24/7.

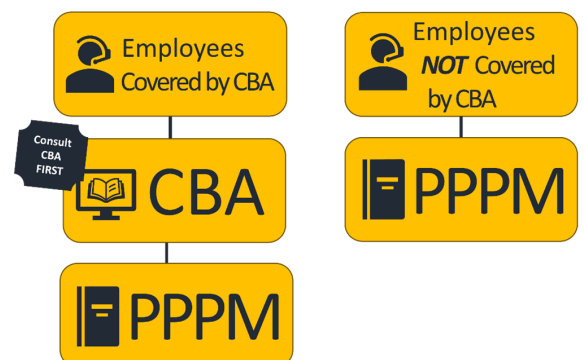


## Frequently Asked Questions: Personnel Policies and Procedures

- **How can I find more information and answers to questions related to my employment, including announcements, promotional opportunities, and policies?**
  - [cityoftulsa.org/employees](http://cityoftulsa.org/employees)
- **Where is the Personnel Policies & Procedures Manual (PPPM) located?**
  - The Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual, (referred to as PPPM for short) is located online at [cityoftulsa.org/policies](http://cityoftulsa.org/policies).
  - IMPORTANT: some employees are covered under a Union/CBA; see below.
- **Who is required to follow PPPM?**
  - All employees are required to know and follow the PPPM, however, some employees are also covered under a Union and Collective Bargaining Agreement.
  - Employees covered by a CBA should always consult the CBA before PPPM. If there is any difference between the two, the CBA is the final authority.
- **If I'm covered under a CBA, do I refer to PPPM or the CBA?**
  - Employees not covered under a CBA should always refer to PPPM.
  - PPPM and CBA language is usually similar but sometimes there are differences. In cases where there is a difference in PPPM and CBA, employees who are covered by a CBA should refer first to the CBA for guidance in how to proceed. If the CBA doesn't specifically cover a certain topic, then review and follow the PPPM language or ask your supervisor for guidance.
  - Find the CBAs here: <https://www.cityoftulsa.org/government/departments/human-resources/union-agreements/>
- **How do I know if I'm covered by a union and Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)?**
  - All employees in the OT, LT, IT, IS 32- IS 48, LT, and EC pay designators are represented by AFSCME Local 1180 unless designated as a confidential employee by the Mayor.
  - Check with your supervisor if you're unsure.
- **What if I am not a dues paying member of the Union? Am I still covered under a CBA?**
  - Yes - regardless of whether you are dues-paying members of AFSCME, all employees in the OT, LT, IT, IS 32- IS 48, LT, and EC pay designators are represented by AFSCME Local 1180 unless designated as a confidential employee by the Mayor.

### PPPM VS. CBA:

Which one should I follow?



- **Is the printed copy of the CBA and PPPM in the break room kept up to date?**
  - To make sure you're referring to the most up to date version, always reference CBAs and PPPM using the links above rather than a printed copy which may be out of date. Since changes regularly occur and new policies are approved throughout the year, updates are posted and communicated through City Connections and/or emails if significant and requiring immediate attention.
- **Why is it important to stay up to date on workplace PPPM and Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA's)?**
  - It is the responsibility of all employees to read, understand, and follow PPPM and the CBA. The PPPM and/or CBA are the framework and rules for employee behavior and workplace expectations.
- **I have questions related to leave. For example, as a new employee, how long is the waiting period before I can use vacation or sick leave? And what happens if I am scheduled to work on a holiday?**
  - Employees should check with their supervisor or payroll clerk for answers related specifically to their work schedule and CBA (if applicable). PPPM states that an employee must complete three (3) months of employment before they can use their accrued vacation leave; and that they must complete one full calendar month of employment before using any accrued sick leave.
  - Additionally, employees should be cautious about using leave without pay (or LWOP) since using LWOP can have a negative appearance.
  - It's understandable that there may be circumstances out of your control and that in some rare instances, LWOP cannot be avoided. But excessive use of LWOP could lead to disciplinary action and jeopardize employment.
  - The best way to avoid excessive LWOP is to plan ahead, communicate with your supervisor ahead of time if you anticipate an absence, and refrain from abusing sick leave so that you will have available accruals if needed later.
- **What happens if I don't use my floating holidays before the end of the calendar year?**
  - Unlike vacation and sick leave, floating holidays do not carry over to the next year and instead expire at the end of each calendar year. Employees should plan ahead to make arrangements to use their floating holidays before they expire. Supervisors may deny requests for floating holidays if not requested in advance or the employee is needed at work.
- **What if I need to be absent on leave that might be covered by the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)? Do I have to tell my supervisor the details of my medical situation?**
  - Email [FMLA@cityoftulsa.org](mailto:FMLA@cityoftulsa.org) for assistance. While employees are strongly discouraged from sharing medical specifics with management, management still needs to be aware of employee attendance for operational purposes.
  - When requesting time off for FMLA purposes, employees must advise their supervisor as soon as practicable of a need to be off for FMLA and the expected duration of the leave. For planned medical treatment, notice should be given upon scheduling of the appointment. For unplanned absences, the normal procedures/policies for calling in sick must be followed.
- **Am I allowed to punch in and out of work on my phone or my computer? Sometimes my phone is more convenient to use than the wall clock.**
  - For punching in and out, employees should not use a phone or tablet unless pre-approved by HR which is only done in rare cases.
  - Instead, employees must use one of the following options to record punches in the payroll system:

- Wall terminals or time clocks;
  - City computers (laptop or desktop only except in rare, limited circumstances pre-approved by Human Resources);
  - A personal computer (laptop or desktop only) regularly used for approved remote work;
  - Or if the employee is unable to use an approved device, as listed in a, b, or c above, the employee must contact their supervisor, in writing, to provide the employee's clock in or clock out punches as soon as possible on the same day of the work performed.
- **I'm on probation. What does that mean for me?**
    - For employees in their initial year of employment with the City, they are considered at-will and may be released from employment at any time. The first year probationary period is a time for employees to demonstrate the skills and abilities they showcased to management during the hiring process. After completion of the first year probationary period, employees are no longer at-will and are afforded civil service protections.
    - Promotional probation is different than first year probation. See PPPM Section 100 for more details.
  - **Can I file a complaint as a probationary employee?**
    - Employees may file a complaint at any time regardless of probationary status.
  - **I still have questions on PPPM or the CBA. How should I proceed?**
    - Most questions can be answered by your supervisor and in nearly all cases, you should go through your chain of command for specific questions about your job. Many common, general questions related to pay, hours worked, and leave can be answered by your payroll clerk. (In some instances, you can bypass your chain of command via the Union in order to file a grievance or in cases involving violations of the Respectful Workplace Policy. See PPPM 822 for more information.

## Helpful Contact & Webpage Information:

- **Employment Office & Job Opportunities:** [jobs@cityoftulsa.org](mailto:jobs@cityoftulsa.org)
- **Insurance Benefits:** [Insurance@cityoftulsa.org](mailto:Insurance@cityoftulsa.org)
- **Retirement Benefits:** [Retirement@cityoftulsa.org](mailto:Retirement@cityoftulsa.org)
- **Safety Training & Policy:** [Safety@cityoftulsa.org](mailto:Safety@cityoftulsa.org)
- **City Medical:** [CityMedical@cityoftulsa.org](mailto:CityMedical@cityoftulsa.org)
- **Security:** [OTCSecurity@cityoftulsa.org](mailto:OTCSecurity@cityoftulsa.org)
- **E-Service Desk:** <https://servicedeskplus.cityoftulsa.org/> or [eservicedesk@cityoftulsa.org](mailto:eservicedesk@cityoftulsa.org)
- **Munis ESS (Employee Self Service):** <https://cityoftulsa.munisselfservice.com/default.aspx>
- **Ethics Hotline:** <https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/58783/index.html>
- **Ethics Handbook:** <https://www.cityoftulsa.org/media/17448/ethics-handbook-2021.pdf>
- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** <https://www.cityoftulsa.org/city-employees/human-resources/city-medical/employee-assistance-program/>
- **Employee Webpage:** <https://www.cityoftulsa.org/employees>
- **Holiday Schedule:** <https://www.cityoftulsa.org/connect/contact-the-city/city-holiday-schedule/>
- **To file a complaint:** [HRDirector@cityoftulsa.org](mailto:HRDirector@cityoftulsa.org)



## Winter Weather Preparedness

With winter weather comes the need to prepare your home, automobile, and family to deal with the colder temperatures, as well as the possibility of snow and ice.

### Prepare your Vehicle

Before traveling make sure to prepare your vehicle. Packing blankets, emergency food and water, flashlights, a radio, and a cell phone with extra batteries will help you and your family, should you become stranded because of the weather.

Always heed the warnings of law enforcement and transportation officials regarding road conditions and refrain from traveling when road conditions warrant. If you must travel during a snow or ice event, allow extra time to reach your destination, and make sure you have plenty of fuel. Be particularly cautious on bridges and overpasses as they will be the first to freeze. Also, stay back at least 200 feet behind salt and sand equipment in order to stay safe.

### Protect your Home

It's also important to remember to protect your home. Adding weather stripping and insulation, keeping furnaces clean and ready to use, and being aware of cold temperatures and vulnerable pipes that might freeze are just some of the actions that can help prevent major and costly winter weather-related damage.

In recent years Oklahoma has been pounded with ice storms. Since 2007, ice storms have been responsible for more than 55 deaths and power outages to more than 640,000 homes and businesses across the state. Infrastructure damage to cities, towns, and counties alone exceeded \$250 million.

### Stay Informed

Stay informed regarding hazardous winter weather conditions on NOAA All Hazards Weather Radio and on local radio and television stations. Sign up to receive OEM's weather alerts and receive National Weather Service (NWS) watches and warnings directly to your cell phone or email address at [Winter Weather Preparedness](#)

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## Additional Winter Weather Preparedness Tips

Below are some additional winter weather preparedness tips. For more information on how to cope with winter weather, contact your local emergency manager.

### Be Aware:

- Know what winter storm and blizzard watches and warnings mean.
- An NWS Winter Storm watch is a message indicating that conditions are favorable to a winter storm.
- An NWS warning indicates that a winter storm is occurring or is imminent.
- A blizzard warning means sustained winds or frequent gusts to 35 mph or greater and considerable falling or blowing snow are expected to prevail for a period of three hours or longer.
- Depend on a reliable weather information source (the Internet, NOAA Weather All Hazards Radio, local television, and radio stations) for the latest weather information.

### Plan for a Winter Storm:

- Develop a Family Disaster Plan for winter storms. Discuss with your family what to do if a winter storm watch or warning is issued. Everyone should know what to do in case all family members are not together when a winter storm hits.
- Understand the hazards of wind chill. A strong wind combined with a temperature of just below freezing can have the same effect as a still air temperature of 35 degrees or colder.
- Check on family, friends, and neighbors, especially the elderly. Make sure they are prepared.
- Don't forget about the pets. Make sure they have good food and water supplies and a place to seek shelter.
- Have your car winterized by checking antifreeze, washer blades, tire pressure, etc.

### If you must go outside:

- Avoid strenuous activity like shoveling snow, pushing a car, or walking in deep snow. Activities like these can lead to overexertion. Take breaks often and go inside to warm up.
- Walk carefully to avoid slips or falls and to avoid injury.
- Dress in many layers to prevent hypothermia and frostbite.

### If you must drive:

- Check the weather and be aware of weather conditions along your route. Check the road conditions before setting out.
  - Always wear your seatbelt.
  - Make sure you have a fully stocked emergency kit in your car at all times.
  - Let someone know your destination, route, and estimated arrival time.
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