LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE

TITLE 3. ORGANIZATION OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT

SUBTITLE B. COMMISSIONERS COURT AND COUNTY OFFICERS

CHAPTER 86. CONSTABLE

SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 86.001. ELIGIBILITY TO SERVE AFTER BOUNDARY CHANGE. A person who has served as the constable of a precinct for 10 or more consecutive years before a change is made in the boundaries of the precinct is not ineligible for reelection in the precinct because of residence outside the precinct if the constable's residence is within the boundaries of the precinct as they existed before the change.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 149, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 86.002. OATH; BOND. (a) Before entering on the duties of office, a person who is elected to the office of constable must execute a bond with two or more good and sufficient sureties or with a solvent surety company authorized to do business in this state. The bond must be payable to the governor and the governor's successors in office and conditioned that the constable will faithfully perform the duties imposed by law. The bond must be approved by the commissioners court of the county. The commissioners court shall set the bond in an amount of not less than $500 or more than $1,500.

(b) A person who is elected constable must also take and sign the constitutional oath of office. The oath shall be endorsed on the bond, together with the certificate of the officer who administers the oath. The bond and oath must be deposited and recorded in the office of the clerk of the county court.

(c) The bond is not void on the first recovery but may be sued on from time to time in the name of an injured party until the whole amount of the bond is recovered.

(d) A person who is elected or appointed to the office of constable and who has given the necessary bond and taken the oath of office may immediately perform the duties of the office. The acts

of the constable are as valid in law as if the constable were commissioned.

(e) Repealed by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 683, Sec. 1, eff. Aug. 28, 1995.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 149, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987. Amended by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 683, Sec. 1, eff. Aug. 28, 1995.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 1094 (H.B. 2120), Sec. 18, eff. September 1, 2005.

Sec. 86.0021. QUALIFICATIONS; REMOVAL.

Text of subsection effective until January 01, 2025

(a) A person is not eligible to serve as constable unless:

(1) the person is eligible to be licensed under Sections 1701.309 and 1701.312, Occupations Code, and:

(A) has at least an associate's degree conferred by an institution of higher education accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board;

(B) is a special investigator under Article 2.122(a), Code of Criminal Procedure; or

(C) is an honorably retired peace officer or honorably retired federal criminal investigator who holds a certificate of proficiency issued under Section 1701.357, Occupations Code; or

(2) the person is an active or inactive licensed peace officer under Chapter 1701, Occupations Code.

Text of subsection effective on January 01, 2025

(a) A person is not eligible to serve as constable unless:

(1) the person is eligible to be licensed under Sections 1701.309 and 1701.312, Occupations Code, and:

(A) has at least an associate's degree conferred by an institution of higher education accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board;

(B) is a special investigator under Article

2A.002(a), Code of Criminal Procedure; or

(C) is an honorably retired peace officer or honorably retired federal criminal investigator who holds a certificate of proficiency issued under Section 1701.357, Occupations Code; or

(2) the person is an active or inactive licensed peace officer under Chapter 1701, Occupations Code.

(b) On or before the 270th day after the date a constable takes office, the constable shall provide, to the commissioners court of the county in which the constable serves, evidence that the constable has been issued a permanent peace officer license under Chapter 1701, Occupations Code. A constable who fails to provide evidence of licensure under this subsection or who fails to maintain a permanent license while serving in office forfeits the office and is subject to removal in a quo warranto proceeding under Chapter 66, Civil Practice and Remedies Code.

(c) The license requirement of Subsection (b) supersedes the license requirement of Section 1701.302, Occupations Code.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 884, Sec. 3, eff. Jan. 1, 1998. Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 877, Sec. 1, eff. Aug. 30, 1999; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1420, Sec. 14.821, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 954 (H.B. 1588), Sec. 1, eff. June 18, 2005.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 765 (H.B. 4504), Sec. 2.134, eff. January 1, 2025.

Sec. 86.003. NEW BOND; REMOVAL. (a) If any of the sureties of a constable dies, permanently moves from this state, becomes insolvent, or is released from liability as provided by law or if the commissioners court determines that the bond of the constable is insufficient, the court shall issue a citation that requires the constable to appear at a time set in the citation, after the 10th day but on or before the 30th day after the date the citation is issued, in order to execute a new bond with good and sufficient surety.

(b) If the constable neglects or refuses to appear to execute the bond at the designated time, the constable shall cease to perform the duties of the office and shall be removed from office by the judge of the district court in the manner provided by law for the removal of county officers.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 149, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

SUBCHAPTER B. DEPUTIES

Sec. 86.011. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CONSTABLE. (a) An elected constable who desires to appoint a deputy must apply in writing to the commissioners court of the county and show that it is necessary to appoint a deputy in order to properly handle the business of the constable's office that originates in the constable's precinct. The application must state the name of the proposed deputy. The commissioners court shall approve and confirm the appointment of the deputy only if the commissioners court determines that the constable needs a deputy to handle the business originating in the precinct.

(b) Each deputy constable must qualify in the manner provided for deputy sheriffs under Section 85.003.

(c) The constable is responsible for the official acts of each deputy of the constable. The constable may require a deputy to post a bond or security. A constable may exercise any remedy against a deputy or the deputy's surety that a person may exercise against the constable or the constable's surety.

(d) A person commits an offense if the person:

(1) serves as a deputy constable and the person has not been appointed as provided by Subsection (a); or

(2) is a constable and issues a deputyship without the consent and approval of the commissioners court.

(e) An offense under Subsection (d) is punishable by a fine of not less than $50 or more than $1,000.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 149, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Amended by:

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 234 (H.B. 1049), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2021.

Sec. 86.012. RESERVE DEPUTY CONSTABLES. (a) The commissioners court of a county may authorize a constable of the county to appoint reserve deputy constables. The commissioners court may limit the number of reserve deputy constables that a constable may appoint.

Text of subsection effective until January 01, 2025

(b) A reserve deputy constable serves at the discretion of the constable and may be called into service at any time that the constable considers it necessary to have additional officers to preserve the peace and enforce the law. The constable may authorize a reserve deputy constable who is a peace officer as described by Article 2.12, Code of Criminal Procedure, to carry a weapon or act as a peace officer at all times, regardless of whether the reserve deputy constable is engaged in the actual discharge of official duties, or may limit the authority of the reserve deputy constable to carry a weapon or act as a peace officer to only those times during which the reserve deputy constable is engaged in the actual discharge of official duties. A reserve deputy constable who is not a peace officer as described by Article 2.12, Code of Criminal Procedure, may act as a peace officer only during the actual discharge of official duties. A reserve deputy constable, regardless of whether the reserve deputy constable is a peace officer as described by Article 2.12, Code of Criminal Procedure, is not:

(1) eligible for participation in any program provided by the county that is normally considered a financial benefit of full-time employment or for any pension fund created by statute for the benefit of full-time paid peace officers; or

(2) exempt from Chapter 1702, Occupations Code.

Text of subsection effective on January 01, 2025

(b) A reserve deputy constable serves at the discretion of the constable and may be called into service at any time that the constable considers it necessary to have additional officers to preserve the peace and enforce the law. The constable may authorize a reserve deputy constable who is a peace officer as

described by Article 2A.001, Code of Criminal Procedure, to carry a weapon or act as a peace officer at all times, regardless of whether the reserve deputy constable is engaged in the actual discharge of official duties, or may limit the authority of the reserve deputy constable to carry a weapon or act as a peace officer to only those times during which the reserve deputy constable is engaged in the actual discharge of official duties. A reserve deputy constable who is not a peace officer as described by Article 2A.001, Code of Criminal Procedure, may act as a peace officer only during the actual discharge of official duties. A reserve deputy constable, regardless of whether the reserve deputy constable is a peace officer as described by Article 2A.001, Code of Criminal Procedure, is not:

(1) eligible for participation in any program provided by the county that is normally considered a financial benefit of full-time employment or for any pension fund created by statute for the benefit of full-time paid peace officers; or

(2) exempt from Chapter 1702, Occupations Code.

(c) Except as provided by Subsection (c-1), a reserve deputy constable must take the official oath and must execute a bond in the amount of $2,000, payable to the constable. The oath and bond must be filed with the county clerk of the county in which the appointment is made. Except as provided by Subsection (c-2), the oath and bond must be given before the reserve deputy constable's entry on duty and simultaneously with the officer's appointment.

(c-1) If a constable appoints more than one reserve deputy constable, the constable may execute a blanket surety bond to cover the reserve deputy constables. Instead of a reserve deputy constable executing an individual bond under Subsection (c) or the constable executing a blanket surety bond, the county may self-insure against losses that would have been covered by the bond.

(c-2) A person reappointed as a reserve deputy constable may continue to perform the duties of office before retaking the official oath. The reserve deputy constable must retake the oath as soon as possible after being reappointed.

(d) While actively engaged in an assigned duty at the call

of the constable, a reserve deputy constable is vested with the same rights, privileges, and duties of any other peace officer in this state.

(e) The county and the constable do not incur any liability by reason of the appointment of a reserve deputy constable if the reserve deputy constable incurs a personal injury while serving in that capacity.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 149, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987. Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 90, Sec. 3, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1420, Sec. 14.822, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 261 (H.B. 1241), Sec. 1, eff. June 17, 2011.

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 234 (H.B. 1049), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2021.

Acts 2023, 88th Leg., R.S., Ch. 765 (H.B. 4504), Sec. 2.135, eff. January 1, 2025.

SUBCHAPTER C. POWERS AND DUTIES

Sec. 86.021. GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES. (a) A constable shall execute and return as provided by law each process, warrant, and precept that is directed to the constable and is delivered by a lawful officer. Notices required by Section 24.005, Property Code, relating to eviction actions are process for purposes of this section that may be executed by a constable.

(b) A constable may execute any civil or criminal process throughout the county in which the constable's precinct is located and in other locations as provided by the Code of Criminal Procedure or by any other law.

(c) A constable expressly authorized by statute to perform an act or service, including the service of civil or criminal process, citation, notice, warrant, subpoena, or writ, may perform the act or service anywhere in the county in which the constable's precinct is located.

(d) Regardless of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, all civil process may be served by a constable in the constable's county

or in a county contiguous to the constable's county, except that a constable who is a party to or interested in the outcome of a suit may not serve any process related to the suit. All civil process served by a constable at any time or place is presumed to be served in the constable's official capacity if under the law the constable may serve that process in the constable's official capacity. A constable may not under any circumstances retain a fee paid for serving civil process in the constable's official capacity other than the constable's regular salary or compensation. Any fee paid to a constable for serving civil process in the constable's official capacity shall be deposited with the county treasurer of the constable's county.

(e) The constable shall attend each justice court held in the precinct.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 149, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987. Amended by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 1, Sec. 13(a), eff. Aug. 28, 1989; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 884, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1998.

Amended by:

Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 846 (S.B. 2197), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2009.

Sec. 86.023. COLLECTION LIABILITY. If, for collection, a constable receives a bond, bill, note, or account from any person and the constable gives a receipt in an official capacity for the instrument or account, the constable and the constable's sureties are liable under the constable's bond for the amount collected if the constable fails to pay the amount on demand to the person for whom the constable made the collection.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 149, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 86.024. FAILURE TO EXECUTE PROCESS. (a) If a constable fails or refuses to execute and return according to law a process, warrant, or precept that is lawfully directed and delivered to the constable, the constable shall be fined for contempt before the court that issued the process, warrant, or precept on the motion of the person injured by the failure or refusal. This section does not apply to actions brought under or

that could have been brought under Chapter 34, Civil Practice and Remedies Code.

(b) The fine shall be set at not less than $10 or more than $100, with costs. The fine shall be for the benefit of the injured person. The constable must be given 10 days' notice of the motion.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 149, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Amended by:

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 421 (S.B. 1269), Sec. 6, eff. September 1, 2007.

Sec. 86.025. UNFINISHED BUSINESS. If a constable vacates the office for any reason, all unfinished business shall be transferred to the succeeding constable and completed in the same manner as if the successor had begun the business.

Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 149, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.