

APPOINTMENT OF HEALTH AUTHORITY General Instructions

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) provides support for the appointment of Health Authorities in Texas and maintains the database of appointments. Other DSHS responsibilities include coordination of training activities and availability of reference tools to ensure Health Authorities understand the roles and responsibilities of their office to serve their local communities.

Definition and Term of Office

In accordance with [Texas Health and Safety Code § 121.021](#), a Health Authority is a physician appointed to administer state and local laws relating to public health within the appointing body's jurisdiction. A Health Authority serves for a term of two years and may be appointed to successive terms.

Health authorities can be appointed by the following:

- Commissioners courts
- Governing bodies of municipalities
- Local health department directors who are not physicians
- Public health district directors who are not physicians

Duties

Under [Texas Health and Safety Code § 121.024](#), a Health Authority is a state officer when performing duties prescribed by state law. A Health Authority shall perform each duty necessary to implement and enforce a law to protect the public health or prescribed by DSHS. Duties include (1) establishing, maintaining, and enforcing quarantine in the Health Authority's jurisdiction; (2) aiding DSHS in relation to local quarantine, inspection, disease prevention and suppression, birth and death statistics, and general sanitation in the Health Authority's jurisdiction; (3) reporting the presence of contagious, infectious, and dangerous epidemic diseases in the Health Authority's jurisdiction as prescribed by DSHS; (4) reporting on any subject on which it is proper for DSHS to direct that a report be made; and (5) aiding DSHS in the enforcement of proper rules, requirements, and ordinances; sanitation laws; quarantine rules; and vital statistics collections.

Required Forms

Each newly appointed Health Authority must file copies of three forms with the Regional Medical Director for the respective DSHS Health Service Region immediately after appointment to office:

1. **Statement of Appointed/Elected Officer:** Constitutional oath that the Health Authority did not give or promise any material, financial, or other reward in return for the appointment.
2. **Oath of Office:** Constitutional oath to execute the duties of the office of Health Authority.
3. **Certificate of Appointment.** Statutory certification from the appointing entity.

Questions

If you have questions regarding the Health Authority appointment process or about completing the forms, please contact your [DSHS Public Health Region office](#) or the DSHS Division for Regional & Local Health Services office in Austin at (512) 776-7770. See links below for contact information:

[Texas Department of State Health Services Public Health Region Offices](#). This site includes the information to locate the Regional Medical Director for the appropriate Health Service Region, including addresses, telephone numbers, FAX numbers, and maps of the DSHS Health Service Region Offices.

[Map of DSHS Public Health Regions](#). This page provides a map showing the regional boundaries.