



**TEXAS BOARD
OF
PARDONS AND PAROLES**

Number: BPP-POL. 141.203

Date: August 13, 2020

Page: 1 of 4

Supersedes: April 18, 2019

BOARD POLICY

SUBJECT: USE OF TECHNOLOGY

PURPOSE: To establish a policy of the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles regarding the use of technology.

AUTHORITY: Texas Government Code Sections 508.052, 508.053, and 551.127

POLICY: It is the policy of the Board to use appropriate technological solutions to improve the Board's ability to perform its functions and provide public access to interact with the Board on the internet.

DISCUSSION: Chapter 508, Texas Government Code, defines the functions of the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles (Board). Section 508.036 contains general administrative duties of the Presiding Officer and the Board. Sections 508.044 and 508.0441 delineate specific powers and duties of the Board. Section 508.045 indicates parole panels are comprised of at least one Board Member and may be a combination of Board Members and Parole Commissioners who are responsible for matters of release on parole, release to mandatory supervision, and revocation of parole or mandatory supervision. Section 508.046 requires all members of the Board to vote on the release of an inmate convicted of an offense listed in that section.

Chapter 48, Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, defines the Board's duties and responsibilities as it relates to clemency matters.

Section 508.052(a), Texas Government Code, authorizes the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to provide the Board with necessary computer access to all computerized records related to the duties and functions of the Board. The Board will adhere to the policies set forth by the TDCJ Information Technology Division (IT) in developing applications programming, network support, special projects, system and network operations, support services, and administrative services. The Board will maintain an internet web page on the TDCJ web server that provides information and assistance to the public, including the ability for the public to interact with the Board via the internet.

PROCEDURE:

I. Board Functions

- A. To the extent that technology may be used to assist in performing the duties and responsibilities of the Board, the Board and Board staff shall use available technology as appropriate.
- B. Section 508.045, Texas Government Code, defines parole panels' duties and responsibilities. These relate to the release and revocation of parole and mandatory supervision and the imposition, modification, and withdrawal of conditions of parole and mandatory supervision. Section 508.046, Texas Government Code, defines the Board's duties and responsibilities related to the "Extraordinary Vote". The Board and Board staff shall use technology to include, but not limited to, reviewing offenders' cases electronically and recording the Board and parole panel's votes.
 - 1. The Board and Board staff shall use the technology provided by TDCJ IT: The TDCJ mainframe system, the Offender Information Management System (OIMS), OnBase, and Classification Profile.
 - 2. The Board and Board staff may use teleconference and videoconference technology to fulfill the parole and mandatory supervision release and revocation duties and responsibilities.
 - 3. As new technology is developed and made available, the Board and Board staff shall incorporate the new technological solutions in their daily operations.
- C. Articles 48.01 and 48.05, Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, define the Board's duties and responsibilities as related to reprieves, commutation of punishment, pardons, and restoration of civil rights. To the extent that technology may be used to assist in performing these duties, the Board and Board staff shall use available technology, to include, but not limited to, reviewing an applicant's case electronically and recording the Board's vote; and utilizing teleconference or videoconference technology to conduct a hearing, meeting or interview, as appropriate.
- D. Section 508.047, Texas Government Code, requires the Board to meet at least once in each quarter of the calendar year at a site determined by the Presiding Officer. Section 551.127, Videoconference Call, authorizes a Member or employee of a governmental body to participate remotely in a meeting of a government body by means of videoconference. The Board and Board staff may use videoconference technology to conduct a statutorily required quarterly meeting as determined by the Presiding Officer.
- E. Section 508.153, Texas Government Code, requires the Board to allow the victim to appear in person to present a statement about the offense, the offender and the

effect of the offense on the victim. Section 508.141(c), Texas Government Code, authorizes the Board to have the offender appear before the panel and interview the offender. The Board may use teleconference and videoconference technology to conduct an interview with a victim or a representative of the victim, and the offender.

- F. Section 508.228, Texas Government Code, requires the Board to conduct a hearing prior to imposing sex offender treatment conditions on an offender who was not convicted of a sex offense. Section 508.281, Texas Government Code, authorizes the Board to conduct a hearing to dispose of the charges when an offender is accused of a violation of parole or mandatory supervision. The Board and Board staff may use videoconference technology to conduct these hearings.

II. Public Interaction

- A. The Public Information Director shall designate a Website Coordinator who shall act as the Board's liaison to the TDCJ Webmaster.
 - 1. The Public Information Director shall submit recommendations to the Website Coordinator to update and improve the Board's website.
 - 2. After approval, the Website Coordinator shall coordinate the update and improvement with the TDCJ Webmaster.
 - 3. The Website Coordinator shall receive and respond to recommendations and complaints concerning the Board's website as the Public Information Director instructs.
- B. The Public Information Director shall ensure the public may interact with the Board through the internet via the Board's website. The Public Information Director supervises the Ombudsman, who will be the Board's point-of-contact for public inquiries.
 - 1. The Ombudsman shall respond to public inquiries and requests pursuant to the Texas Public Information Act.
 - 2. Upon receiving communication from the public, the Ombudsman shall respond to the inquiry as required by law or refer as appropriate.
- C. The Website Coordinator shall provide a designated email address for the Ombudsman on the Board's website, as well as phone numbers and mailing addresses for all Board offices.

III. Website Accessibility - The Board shall ensure all users of the Board's website have access.

- A. The website shall include several features designed for users with disabilities. This includes, but is not limited to, descriptive text equivalent, data tables with content summaries, and special reports and publications in accessible formats.

- B. The website shall be compatible with a wireless communication device and the most recent version of each internet browser as identified by the Department of Information Resources.

ADOPTED BY MAJORITY VOTE OF THE BOARD ON THE 13TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2020.

DAVID GUTIÉRREZ, PRESIDING OFFICER (CHAIR)

**Signature on file.*