



Critical Vacancy Risk Worksheet

Price what the empty chair actually costs — service impact, overtime, compliance, safety — and turn it into a decision.

WHAT THIS HELPS YOU DO

Use this worksheet to quantify what a critical vacancy is costing per month — in overtime, service risk, compliance exposure, and burnout — so the fill-versus-wait decision is made with numbers instead of hope.

WHEN TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

- When a critical role has been open more than 30 days
- Before hiring freezes touch service-critical positions
- When overtime is quietly absorbing a vacancy
- When a licensed operator, inspector, or finance role sits empty
- Before budget season decides which vacancies 'can wait'

WHAT THIS DOCUMENT HELPS PREVENT

- Vacancy 'savings' that cost more than the salary saved
- License and compliance lapses when the one certified person is gone
- Burnout resignations that convert one vacancy into three
- Public safety and service failures with a known, dated cause
- Council decisions about positions with no cost picture

Faulkner HR Solutions focuses on the system behind the people problem. This tool is designed to help employers slow down the decision, identify the risk, and create proof before the issue becomes a claim, complaint, turnover event, or credibility problem.

BEFORE YOU START: READINESS CHECKLIST

Gather the following before working through this document. Incomplete inputs are one of the most common reasons employer decisions fail under later scrutiny.

Have it	Input	Notes / location
☐	Employee name and role	
☐	Date of incident, request, or separation	



Have it	Input	Notes / location
☐	Supervisor involved	
☐	Policy or handbook section that applies	
☐	Prior documentation on file	
☐	Pay records, if applicable	
☐	Relevant emails, texts, notes, or complaints	
☐	Decision-maker name	
☐	Deadline, if applicable	



VACANCY RISK WORKSHEET

An unfilled position is not saved money — it's redistributed cost. This worksheet finds where the cost went and what it's compounding into.

Part 1 — Vacancy Snapshot

Position and department	
Vacant since (days open)	
Budgeted salary + benefits (the 'savings')	
Required licenses/certifications the position holds	
Recruitment status (posted, interviews, failed searches)	

Part 2 — Service Impact

True	Impact	Evidence
☐	Response times or service levels have measurably degraded	
☐	Work is being deferred (inspections, maintenance, reporting) — list what	
☐	A statutory or permit-required function depends on this role	
☐	Citizens/customers have complained traceably to the gap	
☐	Another department is absorbing the work informally	

Part 3 — Cost Redistribution (monthly)

Cost line	How calculated	Monthly \$
Overtime covering the gap	OT hours × loaded rates	
Contractor / mutual aid backfill	Invoices	
Deferred maintenance / rework risk	Estimate honestly	
Supervisor time absorbed	Hours × rate	
Recruitment restarts (failed searches)	Advertising + panel time	
TOTAL monthly cost vs. budgeted 'savings'		

**Part 4 — Compliance and Safety Risk**

True	Risk	Details
☐	A license the system requires (water operator, inspector, CDL) is now held by one person or zero	
☐	Required reports, filings, or sampling are late or at risk	
☐	Safety coverage (confined space, traffic control, second responder) is thinner than policy requires	
☐	Single point of failure: one illness or resignation from service disruption	

Part 5 — Burnout / Cascade Risk

Employee absorbing the load	Extra hours/mo	Fatigue/morale signals	Flight risk (1-3)

Part 6 — Decision

Total monthly cost of vacancy (Part 3) vs. monthly cost of filling	
Risk rating (low / elevated / critical) with basis	
Recommended action (expedite fill / interim contract / restructure / accept with mitigation)	
Mitigation while open (rotation relief, temp coverage, deferral decisions made explicit)	
Decision authority and date	

Role	Name / signature	Date
Prepared by		
Department head		
Manager / administrator		



STOP AND REVIEW BEFORE ACTING

If any statement below is true, pause. Get the decision reviewed by HR, counsel, or Faulkner HR Solutions before you act.

- ☐ One license-holder remains for a permit-required system.
- ☐ The employee covering the vacancy is showing the same exit signals as the person who left.
- ☐ Overtime already exceeds the vacant position's salary.
- ☐ A statutory deadline depends on capacity that no longer exists.
- ☐ The 'temporary' coverage plan is in month seven.

MINIMUM DOCUMENTATION STANDARD

Before this file is closed, the employer should be able to answer every question below and point to where the proof lives.

Question	Your answer / where the proof is stored
What happened?	
When did it happen?	
Who observed or reported it?	
What policy, standard, deadline, or expectation applies?	
What decision was made?	
Who had authority to make the decision?	
What alternatives were considered?	
What risk was reviewed?	
What follow-up is required?	
Where is the proof stored?	

COMMON MISTAKES

1. Counting the vacancy as budget savings while overtime eats 130% of it.
2. Assuming exempt staff absorbing the work is free — burnout resignations are the invoice.
3. Leaving 'what are we NOT doing' undecided, so deferral happens by accident.
4. Waiting for budget season when the cascade is happening now.
5. Recruiting at a rate the market already refused twice.
6. Never telling council the true cost, then absorbing blame when service fails.



WHAT TO DO NEXT

Take the completed worksheet to the fill/no-fill decision-maker this week — it's one page of numbers. If the answer is still 'wait,' the mitigation section becomes the plan of record, and the burnout table gets re-checked monthly.

Before you terminate, deduct, discipline, classify, or respond, get the decision reviewed.

Call 210.446.8730 or email thomas@faulknerhrsolutions.info.



Public-sector HR decisions have to survive more than internal disagreement. They have to survive records requests, council questions, budget scrutiny, and public trust.

Need help applying this to a real workplace decision?

Faulkner HR Solutions helps Texas employers, nonprofits, municipalities, and growing businesses fix the people systems behind recurring workplace problems.

If this document raised a risk flag, do not guess your way through the next step.

Call: 210.446.8730

Email: thomas@faulknerhrsolutions.info

Website: faulknerhrsolutions.info

DISCLAIMER

This resource is provided for general employer education and planning purposes. It is not legal advice and does not create an attorney-client relationship. Employment laws, agency guidance, and local requirements may change. Employers should review the facts of each situation before acting and consult appropriate HR or legal counsel when needed.