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## TELECOMMUTING POLICY

Policy and guidelines of telecommuting describe how to improve staff efficiency without compromising productivity. 7 Pages 20-307

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[Company]  
Telecommuting Policy and Guidelines

Approved by:

## **Process for Obtaining Telecommuter Status**

The ability to telecommute as an employee of the [Company] is a privilege, not a right. It is voluntary on the part of the employee and the supervisor and requires agreement by both.

To be considered for a telecommuting arrangement, the employee must:

1. Contact his or her supervisor and obtain application materials.
2. Complete application. Application materials and references include:
  - a. Telecommuting Policy and Guidelines
  - b. Telecommuter Handbook
  - c. Application for Telecommuting, including:
    - i. Telecommuting Application form,
    - ii. Supervisor Rating of Telecommuting Application form,
    - iii. Telecommuting Equipment and Work Schedule form,
    - iv. Off-site Work Location Safety Review form,
    - v. 6-Month Telecommuting Review form, and
    - vi. Telecommuting Termination Documentation form
3. If approved to telecommute, work jointly with his or her supervisor to complete the "Telecommuting Equipment and Work Schedule" form.
4. Work jointly with his or her supervisor to complete the 6-month Telecommuting Review.

# Telecommuting Policy and Guidelines

## POLICY

***[Company] will allow telecommuting to create the opportunity for improved staff efficiency without compromising productivity, quality or cost-effective client/customer service.***

The following guidelines and expectations refer to regular and occasional telecommuters unless specifically stated otherwise.

## DEFINITIONS

**Telecommuting** and **teleworking** are synonyms for the use of telecommunication to work outside the traditional office or workplace, for example at home or other space conducive to professional work.

**Telecommuter** is an employee who works at an alternate work site on more than the exceptional occasion (see **Temporary Remote Worker** below). For the purposes of this policy we distinguish between two different types of telecommuters:

- a. **Regular Telecommuter** is a telecommuter who works at an alternate location on a consistent basis. Consistent basis is defined as working outside the traditional office at least 50% of his or her work hours. Regular telecommuters may be expected to share their traditional office workspace with one or more other workers.
- b. **Occasional Telecommuter** is an employee who works infrequently (less than 50%) but on an ongoing basis at an alternate location and whose traditional office workspace is not likely to be shared with others.

**Mobile Worker** is an employee whose job function requires travel to meet and work onsite with clients/customers throughout [Company], for example visiting home nurses and environmental health specialists conducting field inspections. The primary workplace of a mobile worker may or may not be a central [Company] office. Mobile workers are *not* considered to be telecommuters for purposes of this policy.

**Temporary Remote Worker** is an employee approved by his or her supervisor to work off-site on a short-term, temporary basis during discrete circumstances (e.g., snow storms, personal emergencies, acute medical conditions, and other exceptional occasions.). Temporary remote workers are *not* considered to be a telecommuter for purposes of this policy.

### **ELIGIBLE POSITIONS and WORKER ELIGIBILITY**

Telecommuting is entirely at the discretion of one's supervisor or his/her designee(s). Supervisors have the authority to designate those positions for which telecommuting is allowed.

Criteria for designating positions for telecommuting include but are not limited to jobs that can be performed from any location, and where:

- The nature of the individual's job either on an ongoing or episodic basis can be performed more effectively and efficiently under a telecommuting agreement;
- Work productivity can be monitored and measured;
- There is little or no need for a face-to-face presence with the public or co-workers;
- Necessary files/documents can be taken off-site and remain in accordance with HIPAA requirements;
- Impromptu meetings and in-person activities are not an essential part of the employee's work; and
- Access to County computer systems can be acquired off-site.

In order to telecommute, the employee must:

- Be approved for telecommuting by his or her supervisor;
- Not have had any performance or attendance issues in the previous six months;
- Be able to work productively with minimal direct supervision; and
- Have a home/family situation conducive to telecommuting.

### **GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR TELECOMMUTING WORK**

The telecommuter is expected to perform at least at the proficient level for all job performance standards.

Unless indicated otherwise, all other terms and conditions of employment with the [Company] remain unchanged by an employee's status as a telecommuter. Such terms and conditions include but are not limited to:

- The employee's salary, retirement, benefits and employer-sponsored insurance coverage;
- Worker's Compensation and Employer's Liability coverage, which will consider the employee's off-site workstation an extension of the workplace and cover the employee while working at the location and during the set hours of work as indicated in the telework application;
- Other family members or visitors to the telework address are not covered by the Worker's Compensation program. In addition, [Company] is not liable for any injuries to family members, visitors, or others in the employee's home. Employees should consult with their insurance agent to cover these instances.
- [Company]'s Computer Use policy.
- [Company]'s Data Practices Policy and Guidelines.
- Tax implications of home work-sites are the sole responsibility of the employee.

- The arrangement will be reviewed jointly by the employee and the supervisor within 6 months of initial agreement, and at least annually thereafter, to ensure compliance with this policy.

### **SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS FOR TELECOMMUTERS**

**Work expectations.** The telecommuter and his or her supervisor will discuss work assignments and assure that the duties, responsibilities and deliverables are appropriate for telecommuting.

Performance will be reviewed jointly by the telecommuter and the supervisor on a regular basis. Telecommuters should notify their supervisor immediately if there are issues in reaching performance goals.

**Professional Contact.** The extent to which the employee is reachable and responsive shall not be negatively impacted by the telecommuting arrangement.

The telecommuter's business telephone (e.g., county-issued cell phone or mobile device), if applicable, is to be answered by the telecommuter during their business hours. The business phone/cell phone number must be offered to [Company] employees, clients, and any other persons who would need to reach the telecommuter as if they were in the office. The employee's home address and telephone numbers should remain confidential and are not to be given out to the public or staff.

To ensure effective communication with in-office coworkers and others, the telecommuter is expected to check both voicemail and email regularly.

**Dependent care.** Telecommuting is not to be used to allow for child or elder care. Telecommuters may have dependents in the home during telecommuting hours, but only if those dependents are self-sufficient, or are being cared for by another person.

**In-office meetings.** The telecommuter is expected to attend supervisory, unit and section meetings as well as training and other required events and activities, as appropriate. For the telecommuter, conference call participation may be available, given advance arrangement with the supervisor. The supervisor may call the telecommuter in to the office for coverage, emergencies, or other purposes.

**Other Meetings.** No in-person meetings can take place at the telecommuter's home.

### **EQUIPMENT and Workspace**

When in the office the telecommuting employee may be expected to use shared work space designated for telecommuters.

Unless otherwise agreed to, it is the responsibility of the telecommuter to assure and assume responsibility for any cost associated with access to a reliable, high speed internet connection which can be used to connect to [Company] computer network, as necessary. [Company] may at its discretion provide the computer hardware and software necessary for a secure private network and instructions for its installation and use in accessing [Company] systems.

Any [Company]-provided equipment and office supplies remain the property of [Company] and are to be used for work-related purposes. The employee who is provided [Company] equipment for use at an off-site work location agrees to comply with the [Company] Computer Use Policy), specifically agreeing to:

- Use the equipment for business purposes only and prevent any unauthorized use of the equipment;
- Operate the equipment safely, and with support from Department technical staff as needed;
- Maintain the equipment in operating condition or return to [Company] for maintenance; and
- Return the equipment specific to telecommuting immediately (within 5 business days) to the employee's supervisor when telecommuting arrangement is discontinued, or anytime at [Company]'s request.

NOTE: [Company] systems are primarily Microsoft-compatible and PC-based. [Company] is not responsible for hardware or network difficulties due to a telecommuter using incompatible equipment or where service providers block access to county services.

### **HOURS OF WORK**

The daily work schedule will be agreed upon jointly by the telecommuter and the supervisor, to include expectations for attending in-office meetings, trainings and other events.

Any request for an occasional change in telecommuting days (e.g., for personal emergencies or hazardous driving conditions) will be handled by the supervisor on a case-by-case basis.

### **MILEAGE & PARKING**

Travel to and from normal office location for meetings on a telecommuting day are not reimbursable, per [Company] mileage policy. Further, per policy, "mileage reimbursement commences after the first business stop of the day, unless the first business stop is farther than the employee's regular commute to the office, then the employee may log the difference. Mileage reimbursement from the last stop to home cannot be claimed, unless the distance to the employee's residence is greater than the regular commute, then the employee may claim the difference" (see [Company] Mileage Determination Guidelines).

### **DOCUMENT HANDLING AND DATA PRIVACY**

The telecommuter is responsible for the safe and secure transportation of files as needed to and from the office. Only files currently being worked on may be left at home.

The telecommuter will ensure the proper handling of files and computer data by complying with the [name] Act and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), applying the more stringent of the two with regards to any particular situation, and specifically ensuring that:

- Files are transferred to and from the office in a secured manner, and files are not left unattended at any time.
- Storing files in a locked drawer, file cabinet, case or room to which other household members do not have access.

- Using the appropriate [Company]-mandated secure log-on procedures when accessing County systems and logging off any [Company] systems and any other private information data bases when not working at the computer.
- Preventing other household occupants from looking at computer and file data while telecommuter is working.
- Bringing all paper copies of private data printed at home back to the office for filing or for confidential destruction.

The employee will take all reasonable precautions to protect [Company] documents from theft, damage or misuse.

#### **TERMINATION OF TELECOMMUTING DESIGNATION OR STATUS**

Supervisors have the sole discretion to change, adjust or terminate telecommuting status at any time.

The telecommuting employee may terminate telecommuting status by giving his or her supervisor (or designee) sufficient notice, with the timing of the transition to be determined jointly by the telecommuter and the supervisor.

Telecommuting status may change due, but not limited, to:

- Changes in the employee's job or position;
- The initiation of any kind of disciplinary action; or
- The employee's performance falling below agreed-upon expectations.

The employee may request a return to an in-office location with written notice, though the specific workspace may or may not be the same as the employee's original space. Timing of the return to a traditional workplace setting is contingent on space and equipment availability.

Termination of the telecommuting agreement will be documented through the "Termination Documentation" form, included in the *Application for Telecommuting* packet