



Human Resources Department

Telework Policy

Updated January 12, 2022

Policy Purpose: This policy describes the requirements for establishing, evaluating, and authorizing arrangements for employees to be eligible to perform their work functions at an alternative work location (AWL), and outlines the procedures for working at an alternative location when advantageous and appropriate. Initially developed during the pandemic of 2020, these are universal procedures that can be used during normal operations as well.

Telework arrangements are designed to benefit the City by: ensuring continuity of operations; eliminating commutes and allowing a schedule that can be personalized per position and employee, thus increasing morale and work-life balance; retaining quality staff and attracting new talent by offering this standard benefit; and supporting the City priority of an environmentally sustainable community by decreasing carbon emissions and operating costs. The expectation is that productivity, service, and operations are maintained.

Teleworking arrangements are a privilege and not a right, allowing employees to continue business operations during emergency situations or closures. The decision to continue business operations via telework or to close for an emergency are at the sole discretion of the City Manager or their designee. Continuation of telework during a closure or emergency does not automatically grant any additional extra pay to teleworking employees.

Policy Scope: This Personnel Regulation is applicable to all City employees. Each telework arrangement is considered on a case-by-case basis. The essential functions of each position will be considered to determine if the position is telework-eligible, and each employee must also meet and maintain eligibility requirements. Approved employees must comply with all City policies and consistently demonstrate the City's values of respect, accountability, integrity, and innovation in meeting the performance and behavioral standards of their respective position.

Policy Provisions: The City supports teleworking as an alternative work arrangement and recognizes it to be a viable, flexible, sustainable work option when the employee, the position, and the specific work performed at any given time are suited to such an arrangement.

Teleworking arrangements can be temporary or a formal, recurring schedule where the employee works at a location other than a centralized worksite. Either an employee or a supervisor can propose teleworking as a possible work arrangement. The approval of each teleworking arrangement is at the sole discretion of the Department Head, unless teleworking for more than three (3) days per week is requested, in which case City Manager approval is required. The City Manager may approve telework for more than three (3) days per week for project-based telework for a limited project period or short-term assignment. The City Manager may also approve teleworking arrangements for more than three (3) days per week due to a need for a temporary exemption. Temporary exemptions are for extenuating circumstances such as public emergency situations, individual situations (e.g. medical reasons), or a lack of available office space.



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Each City department may develop additional teleworking requirements, guidelines, or procedures, provided they are consistent with the intent of this policy and approved by the City Manager's office and Human Resources department prior to implementation. Teleworking employees must comply with all City policies and behavioral standards.

*The January 12, 2022 update increased the number of telework days per week without City Manager approval from two (2) days to three (3) days.

Teleworking Eligibility: Each Department Head has sole discretion in determining whether a position and/or an employee is eligible for teleworking. The suitability of telework for a given position should be based on a review of department needs, the departmental work program, the suitability of position duties, and performance level. Some employees, positions, or specific work performed at any given time may not be eligible. The criteria below are not meant to be an exhaustive or mandatory list. The supervisor has the sole discretion to determine feasibility of a teleworking arrangement using the following criteria as a guide.

Position eligibility: Are the essential functions of the position suitable for a telework arrangement? Telework may be suitable when the duties of the position:

- Are independent in nature and can be accomplished without detrimental impact on work group productivity or customer service
- Allow for successful and productive communications with supervisors, colleagues, or members of the public through virtual means such as video conference or phone calls
- Are primarily office-based
- Lend themselves to measurable deliverables
- Support Citywide internal and external customer service needs using methods other than face-to-face interaction

Employee eligibility: Is the employee a good candidate for telework? Some employees are better suited than others to manage the unique requirements of a telework arrangement. Supervisors should consider whether the employee has a record of high productivity and performance and has demonstrated:

- Consistent compliance with all organizational and departmental policies and work rules
- The employee has the ability and willingness to preserve the confidentiality of sensitive City data and software which may be protected from disclosure by public records and/or copyright laws. This includes ensuring that all unauthorized individuals, including but not limited to the employee's family and friends, do not have access to confidential City data or software
- A commitment to actively uphold the City values of respect, accountability, integrity and innovation in their daily work and interactions
- Effective communication with supervisors, coworkers, and customers
- Ability to work with minimal supervision
- Effective time management
- Ability to achieve and maintain a high level of skill and knowledge of the job
- Ability to prioritize work and meet deadlines



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- The employee has adequate internet access in the alternate worksite to perform their assigned duties during teleworking
- The employee understands that their performance expectations must continue to be met while teleworking. Employees who are not upholding City obligations, may be subject to disciplinary measures

Task or work eligibility: The specific work required of an employee or position may change over time in response to seasonal workflow demands, staff team changes, special assignments, or other factors. Therefore, teleworking arrangements may be appropriate at certain times and not others. Telework may be suitable when the specific work demands at any certain time:

- Allow for limited or infrequent in-person interaction
- Do not require a significant amount of the employee's immediate physical presence at a work location
- Can effectively support department processes, workflow, and customer service in a telework environment
- Do not require the use of specialized technologies or equipment (that would be challenging to obtain, maintain, access or utilize in a telework environment)

Other considerations: Can equipment, technology, and physical workspace needs be met in the alternative work location? Teleworking employees must be able to ensure:

- Reliable internet connectivity and speed to support work demands and position
- Compliance with confidentiality requirements
- A safe workspace that offers minimal interruptions or distractions affecting work performance

Telework Location: Are there tax, benefit, labor law, or other legal implications? The primary teleworking location must be mutually agreed upon by City and employee. Careful consideration must be taken to ensure telework arrangements outside of the DMV meet the applicable administrative Federal, State, and Local compliance requirements and licenses. Assuming availability and response requirements set forth by the department are met, telework arrangements outside the DMV area must be approved by the City Manager.

Hours of Work and Availability: Each teleworking arrangement will include hours of work within an established work week. Teleworking involves a cooperative, good-faith agreement that the teleworking employee will maintain the assigned schedule and perform productive work during the designated business hours or confirmed schedule.

Employees must accurately record hours worked using the time-keeping method as required by employment status. If a teleworking employee is unable to work due to illness or personal issues, that time must be reported, just as it would on a non-teleworking schedule. Employees must enter leave requests into the timekeeping system (currently Kronos), for approval. Converseley, all hours worked must be entered into the timekeeping system; non-exempt employees may not work off the clock. Any comp time accrual or overtime hours require pre-approval by the teleworking employee's supervisor.



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The teleworking employee agrees to minimize engaging in personal business or activities beyond the extent considered reasonable at a City worksite.

When teleworking, it is important that all parties understand the expectations regarding communication, responsiveness, and availability during the employee's assigned schedule. A teleworking employee must be available during scheduled work hours by phone, email, or other specified methods of communication with their supervisor, coworkers, and others with whom job-related communication is necessary. Communication between a teleworking employee and their supervisor will be in a manner and frequency appropriate for the position and individuals involved.

Within each workday, teleworking employees take rest breaks and meal periods, consistent with employment status, City policy, and bargaining agreement, if applicable.

Commute between alternative work location and office location: There may be times when the teleworking employee's physical presence is necessary at the worksite. When requested, the teleworking employee will attend job-related meetings, training sessions, etc. at the worksite or location designated by the supervisor. These requests will normally occur in advance of the day when physical presence is required.

When an employee is required to report to the central worksite at the beginning of their scheduled workday, the travel time between the employee's telework location and the central worksite will be considered their normal commute and the time will not be compensable. Similarly, if an employee ends their workday at the central worksite, the drive home afterward is their normal commute.

When an employee begins their scheduled workday by performing work at the telework location and is then required to report to the central worksite mid-shift, the time spent traveling between the telework location and the central worksite will be considered hours worked. If the employee then returns to the telework location to complete their scheduled shift, the time spent traveling between the central worksite and the telework location will be considered hours worked.

For any questions regarding the potential compensation implications of travel time when an employee is required to report to the central worksite, the department must consult with Human Resources.

Productivity and Performance Expectations: All employees will be held to the same performance standards regardless of work location. The supervisor is responsible for establishing productivity and performance standards, as well as the communication and monitoring tools used. Prior to beginning the teleworking arrangement, both the supervisor and teleworking employee will discuss and agree to how the productivity and performance expectations will be measured.

Workspace, Equipment and Office Supplies:

Telecommuting Workspace: Teleworkers are responsible for establishing and maintaining a safe workspace that offers minimal interruptions or distractions affecting work performance. The employee is responsible for costs associated with the setup of the telework workspace which include remodeling,



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furniture or lighting, repairs or modifications to the workspace. The City may provide additional equipment required for the position and cover certain costs on a case-by-case basis. Requests for workspace modifications made under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) will be processed in compliance with City policy.

Central Worksite/Collaboration Center: The availability of a designated workspace at the central worksite will depend upon the nature of work performed and the percentage of time an employee teleworks. Teleworkers may be limited to a temporary, shared workspace versus an assigned cubicle or office.

Technology, Support, and Requirements: The supervisor will determine the appropriate technology and equipment needs (hardware, software, phone, etc.) for each teleworking arrangement. In general, the basic equipment package consists of a laptop, docking station, computer monitor, and laptop power cord. These needs may change over time. Solutions will be explored to prevent the purchase of additional equipment (i.e., go paperless rather than use a printer or scanner at the teleworking location). The Information Technology (IT) Department will serve as a primary resource and will approve all teleworking equipment. Each department will work with the IT Department to ensure that work-related calls can be made and received from home.

Technology or Equipment supplied by the City will be maintained by the City at the central worksite and must be used for business purposes only. The teleworking employee may be required to return and/or deliver City-supplied equipment to the central worksite for maintenance, update and/or repair. The teleworking employee agrees to protect the items from damage or theft. City employees who telecommute are subject to the same City policies regarding the use of City provided equipment as that of employees at the centrally located worksite.

All City property will be returned to the City when the telecommuting arrangement is no longer valid, if the equipment is no longer needed to do their work, if employment with the City is terminated, or as requested, unless other arrangements have been made. City equipment at teleworking locations will be tracked by the employee's department. All City property provided to the teleworking employee will be inventoried by the direct supervisor.

Technology or Equipment supplied by the teleworking employee, if deemed appropriate by the City and approved by the IT department, will be maintained by the employee. The City accepts no responsibility for damage, maintenance, or repairs to employee-owned equipment. Reliable internet connectivity and speed to support work demands and position will be paid by the employee.

Teleworking employees should contact the Information Technology Department Help Desk Monday to Friday at itsupport@takomaparkmd.gov for assistance with any technology challenges. If the technology issue cannot be resolved in a timely manner, e.g. some applications not working from home or internet connection issues, the employee will need to return to the central work location or use their own annual leave or compensatory time until those issues are resolved.



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Office Supplies: The City will supply teleworking employees with appropriate office supplies (pens, paper, etc.) as needed for their position and the work performed.

Additional equipment or expenses: With preapproval, the City may cover certain business-related expenses such as mobile phones, on a case-by-case basis and consistent with City policy, procedures, and budget.

Teleworking expectations: Prospective teleworkers are encouraged to discuss expectations of teleworking with household members prior to entering into a telework agreement. It is important the employee understand the expectations and impacts of a teleworking arrangement from the onset, to support its success.

Teleworking is not designed to be a substitute for appropriate dependent care. Although an individual employee's schedule may be modified to accommodate child or other dependent care responsibilities with supervisor approval, the focus of the arrangement must remain on job performance and meeting business needs.

Staying Connected: Although working from an alternate location, teleworking employees are members of a department team and the larger City organization. Teleworking employees must maintain the same level of coordination, communication, and connectivity with their coworkers, residents, and partners as would be expected in a centralized office environment. Becoming proficient in the tools necessary to do this in a virtual environment is essential.

Work Product Security: Consistent with the City's expectations of information security for employees working at the office, teleworking employees are expected to ensure the protection and safeguarding of any confidential information accessible from their workspace. Employees may not disclose confidential or private files, records, materials, or information, and may not allow access to City networks or databases to anyone who is not authorized to have access. Security steps may include locking your PC when away, regular password maintenance, and any other measures appropriate for the job and the working environment.

The employee is responsible for the security of all confidential information consistent with City policies. When handling particularly sensitive materials, a department may require teleworking employees to work in a location consistent with the employee's certification, such as Criminal Justice Information System requirements. The use of paper should be minimal, taking advantage of electronic means for storing documents. Departments may prohibit employees from printing confidential information in teleworking locations to avoid breaches of confidentiality. Documents must be disposed of in a manner appropriate with the content and consistent with City and departmental policy.

Record Retention: All files, records, papers, or other materials created while teleworking become City property and must be retained (either in hard copy or electronically) consistent with the record retention rules and/or City policy. All electronic documents must be saved to the City network, and



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not maintained on an employee's personal computer. Each department will determine the appropriate storage method and location for documents not electronically saved.

Personal Safety: Teleworking employees are expected to maintain a safe workspace, free from recognized hazards. Teleworking employees are provided industrial injury/illness coverage by the City's Workers' Compensation Program for job-related injuries and illnesses that occur in the course and scope of employment. All employee injuries/illnesses must be reported to the supervisor immediately.

Third-Party Liability: When the work site is in the home, the employee is responsible for injuries and/or property damage to third parties. Employees are encouraged to review their homeowner's insurance policy to ensure they have appropriate coverage and loss limits for potential claims against their policy.

Telework Agreement Procedure: If, after thoroughly vetting the guidelines above, the employee and supervisor agree on the feasibility of a teleworking arrangement, a teleworking agreement will be prepared and signed by all parties. At the supervisor's sole discretion, they may consider allowing the employee to telework on a trial basis. A supervisor should establish a review period after which a decision can be made about an ongoing arrangement.

January 11, 2022 Update: Employees who desire a telework arrangement that differs from their current approved arrangement must obtain a new teleworking agreement. For example, if you are currently approved to telework two (2) days per week and desire to telework three (3) days per week, you must work with your supervisor on a new teleworking agreement reflecting the three (3) telework days per week.

The Department shall maintain all telework requests (approvals and denials) and provide a copy to Human Resources for Citywide tracking purposes. If the supervisor denies the telework agreement in a manner that is inconsistent with the provisions of this policy, the employee can appeal the denial directly to the City Manager or designee and Human Resources Director who will make a determination.

Termination of Telework Agreement: It is important to note a teleworking arrangement may be discontinued at any time at the City's sole discretion or by the employee requesting the agreement's termination. Such arrangements may be altered or canceled to meet changing demands of the workplace, as well as the employee's individual circumstances and should not be treated as a permanent agreement. Teleworking arrangements must be reauthorized on an annual basis and may be reevaluated at any time by the supervisor and employee to determine continued eligibility. Teleworking arrangements may be adjusted or cancelled when the supervisor determines the arrangement to no longer be viable. Every effort will be made to provide advance notice of an adjustment or cancellation in consideration of the potential impacts to the employee. There may be instances when no notice from the supervisor is possible. The adjustment or cancellation of a telework arrangement will be documented.