

Corporate Human Resources Policy		Content Updated: 2013-06-20
Work Environment		Supersedes Policy: Not Applicable
Policy No: HR-02-09		
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TELECOMMUTING POLICY

<p>POLICY STATEMENT</p>	<p>The City of Hamilton (“the City”) supports and encourages flexibility in employee work arrangements whenever it is possible and practical to do so without compromising the efficiency and effectiveness of the City. This Policy outlines how the City will administer telecommuting, for employees approved to telecommute on a regular basis.</p> <p>Telecommuting is an employee privilege and not a guarantee or an entitlement. All Telecommuting arrangements require the approval of an employee’s manager or designate. Due to service delivery needs and the nature of work, Telecommuting cannot be implemented for all positions. Some areas will have greater flexibility to facilitate telecommuting and as such there will be variation across the City in the ability to adopt this Policy.</p>
<p>PURPOSE</p>	<p>The purpose of this Policy is to improve employee engagement, work-life-balance, and flexibility. The benefits to employees and the community include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved quality of life – the ability to balance family time and personal time with work time • Reclaimed commute time for more efficient use of time • Reduced stress • More employee job satisfaction and engagement • Greater employee productivity • Reduced road congestion • Improved air quality resulting from lower vehicle emissions • Increase ability to respond to employee accessibility needs in support of AODA <p>This Policy will help the City apply consistent and clear standards to pre-determine what positions are eligible for Telecommuting (e.g. “Designated Positions”). In addition, the Policy is meant to ensure consistent work practices are followed such that telecommuting employees continue to provide a level of service equal to or better than that provided while at an on-site work location.</p>
<p>SCOPE</p>	<p>This Policy applies to all non-union City employees who have successfully completed their probationary period and have been authorized by their supervisor or manager to telecommute.</p> <p>For return-to-work or work accommodation employees with non-occupational or occupational injuries or illnesses, eligibility to work from home will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.</p>



DEFINITIONS

Core Business Hours

Core Business Hours are between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. This only applies to departments that choose to implement flexible work arrangements; otherwise, the Standard Business Hours take precedence.

Designated Positions

This refers to positions pre-determined by Departments as suitable for Telecommuting. Designated Positions are selected based on the following criteria:

- i. Working off-site will not negatively impact customer service, will not impact the ability of the employee’s co-workers to perform their duties.
- ii. The employee’s work is operationally feasible i.e. work can reasonably be done off-site.

NOTE: In situations such as a pandemic response where there is limited Information Services capacity to support employees to work from home, teleworking positions that provide essential services will take priority.

Ineligible Positions

Ineligible telecommuting positions include:

- i. Positions that require special equipment or vehicles
- ii. Positions that are necessary to protect and serve the safety and welfare of City of Hamilton residents

Designated Workspace

This refers to the at-home office location of the Telecommuting employee.

Standard Business Hours

The normal hours of a Telecommuting employee are the standard business hours of the City, unless otherwise approved by the Manager. The standard business hours within City work locations are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Telecommuting

The performance of some or all of an employee’s job duties at the Designated Workspace, involving the use of technology either to facilitate the performance of such duties or to ensure that the employee and supervisor are accessible to each other.

An approved Telecommuting Agreement is available within the

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Telecommuting Agreement	<p>Telecommuting Procedures; and needs to be filled out by an employee who is regularly Telecommuting. It contains but is not limited to (a) the agreed upon purpose(s) of the Telecommuting; (b) the duration time frame, and frequency of the Telecommuting; and (c) information with regard to supervision, oversight, safety, accountability, compliance, progress reporting, and/or on-site time.</p>	
PRINCIPLES	<p>The following principles apply to Telecommuting at the City:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Efficient and effective delivery of services must be assured and is the primary consideration in the scheduling of work. Each Division and Department must maintain an appropriate number of employees on site at the City offices in order to function effectively. 2. Telecommuting must conform to Ontario employment laws (e.g. employment standards related to meal/break times and overtime). The basic terms and conditions of employment between the employee and the City shall be adhered to. All policies and procedures affecting employment remain in effect during Telecommuting except for those determined by the employer to be non-applicable or those which cannot be applied and enforced. The <i>Occupational Health & Safety Act</i> does not apply when an employee is working in his or her own home. 3. Where applicable, the provisions of any collective bargaining agreement shall continue to apply. 4. Employees scheduled to telecommute on a certain day may occasionally be called to a City on-site work location on short-notice. Employees must remain flexible to accommodate City requirements, if called in on short-notice. 4. When employees are called into work on short notice, they will not be compensated for mileage for their drive to work, nor for their travel time. 5. All employees must have established core business hours in their "Telecommuting Agreement" (See Telecommuting Procedures). All telecommuting employees must still work the same total number of work hours required by their position regardless of their telecommuting agreement work schedule. 	



RESPONSIBILITIES

Information Services Division

- At the request of an employee’s supervisor and division manager, determine whether the designated position can be supported by application support.
- Provide recommendations on the ability to deliver technology equipment and costing requirements (e.g. licensing, hardware, etc); and protect the security of the City’s information and data.
- Sign off on the “Telecommuting Agreement”.
- Set-up, support, maintain, and replace City supplied software and equipment on issued laptops for agreed upon Telecommuting arrangements.

Human Resources Division

- Provide advice and guidance, as requested, on Telecommuting Policy and Procedures.
- Partner with Departments and Divisions to resolve Telecommuting Arrangement issues, as requested.
- On a regular basis, review and update the Policy as needed and ensure its application is in compliance with relevant legislation and considers internal feedback.
- Maintain records, such as the Telecommuting Agreement in the employee’s file.

Telecommuting Employees

- Select a “designated workspace” at home to limit distractions and perform work at this location. Ensure that this workspace meets the standards in the City’s *Occupational Health and Safety Policy* by using the provided *Workplace Working at Home Safety Checklist* and *How to Adjust Your Workstation* (see Telecommuting Procedures).
- Make appropriate dependent care arrangements and manage personal responsibilities in a way that allows successful completion of job responsibilities.
- In the event of a work-related incident or injury in the Designated Workspace, immediately report the incident to his or her supervisor.
- Maintain communication with supervisor and clients and



**Managers/
Supervisors**

ensure other internal employees are aware of their designated workspace contact information per the Telecommuting Procedures.

- Adhere to terms and conditions of employment, the Telecommuting Agreement, employment legislation, and City policies and procedures.
- Do not use personal computers when telecommuting, but rather use a City issued laptop.
- Perform due diligence to protect the security of City’s data and information and client records and confidentiality while working from home or at an off-site location.
- Continue to abide to the City’s *Computer and Technology Acceptable Use Policy*
- Consult with Information Services to ensure their sign off prior to signing off on a “Telecommuting Agreement” to avoid the risk of agreeing to unworkable or unsupportable technology arrangements.
- Ensure the proposed Telecommuting schedule allows the Department or Division to maintain effective operations and, where necessary, make any schedule adjustment prior to sign-off on the agreement.
- Approve the “Telecommuting Agreement” (which includes the employee’s location and schedule) submitted by employee, and provide a copy to HR Records, Human Resources for the employee’s file and a copy to Information Services.
- Monitor the productivity and maintain communication with the Telecommuting employee(s) regardless of the Workplace location. Should performance issues become a problem, deal with those issues as you would with any other employee with a performance problem.
- In the event that the employee has a safety incident in their designated workspace follow the standard internal incident reporting procedure.
- Ensure the Telecommuting employee is aware of typical health and safety precautions advisable for home offices (see Telecommuting Procedure for further details)

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General Manager (or designate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communicate employee names, and positions of those authorized to Telecommute to Human Resources; and to Information Services via distribution of signed copies of the Telecommuting Agreement. ○ Support consistent application of this Policy for all Telecommuting employees. ○ Any special circumstances that may involve exceptions to this Policy require the approval of the Departmental General Manager (or designate) 	
COMPLIANCE	Abuse of a Telecommuting or working from home privilege may result in immediate termination of the privilege; and will result in appropriate disciplinary measures, up to and including dismissal from employment.	
RELATED DOCUMENTS	<p>The following documents are referenced in this Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Corporate Occupational Health & Safety Policy ● Computer & Technology Acceptable Use Policy ● Telecommuting Procedure 	
HISTORY	<p>This Policy was developed by Human Resources. The following stakeholders were consulted for content review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Policy Review Group ● Information Services ● Legal Services ● Telecommuting Advisory Group (City-wide) <p>The Telecommuting Policy was approved by the Senior Management Team on 2013-06-27</p>	