

CITY OF AUSTIN PERSONNEL PROCEDURES

Subject: Telework

Original Date: June 30, 1999

Revision Date: Jan 4, 2013

Human Resources Director Approval: _____

Policy Reference: Personnel Policies, Time and Attendance, p.3

Scope: City of Austin Non-Civil Service Employees

Purpose: To define the personnel guidelines for the administration of telework schedules.

Procedure: This procedure provides guidelines and requirements for establishing and managing effective telework opportunities. Telework is a voluntary, management work option, not an employee benefit. It is subject to Department Director approval and support.

I. DEFINITIONS

A. Telework

Working one or more days each work week at home or at an office near home instead of commuting to a distant work place, including the associated changes in work structure required to create such an arrangement. May or may not include a partial or total substitution of telecommunications technology for the trip to and from the primary workplace.

Telework may be used a few hours a day up to several days per week. It may be created for a temporary application or it may be negotiated for an extended period of time. It is flexible, but it is deliberate: boundaries are defined, expectations and schedules are set, and all City policies apply.

B. Home-based telework

Working in a space specifically set aside as an office in an employee's residence and the most frequently used form of telework.

C. Designated Headquarters

The location of the office to which the employee would traditionally be assigned and report for work, when not teleworking. May also be referred to as central office, main office, or assigned office.

D. Alternate Work Site

The location away from the designated headquarters where the employee establishes his/her telework office. May also be referred to as remote work site or teleworker office.

E. Telework Schedule

A telework schedule established to accommodate a need to work from a site other than the designated headquarters. Term of the schedule may be a few days to several weeks, but generally less than three months. A telework relationship may be established as an on-going work schedule, anticipated to last three months or longer or as a short term work schedule such as those necessitated by convalescence, family leave, or facility access constraints.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Department Director or designee

- May authorize employees to telework within established City guidelines tailored to the specific department requirements. The selection of work tasks, employees and supervisors appropriate for a telework schedule will be at the discretion of the department.
- May designate responsibility for review and approval of the telework schedule within the department.

B. Supervisor or Department designee

- Review, evaluate and approve employee Telework Request Form and related documentation for a telework schedule.
- Review current performance standards and revise, as needed, to accommodate a telework schedule.
- Monitor and manage employee performance.

C. Telework Employee

- Complete required application forms to request a telework schedule and comply with all participation requirements.
- An employee must forego teleworking if needed in the office on the regularly scheduled telework day.
- Provide a safe and healthful environment in which to work.
- In general, employee should be a full or part time regular employee except to meet specific department business needs.
- Employee should have and maintain a performance evaluation rating of meeting or exceeding expectations with no significant disciplinary issues.

- If a dependent normally needs care while the employee is working, employee should make arrangements for a full-time caregiver. The Telework schedule is not a substitute for dependent care.

B. Human Resources Department

- Assist departments in designing, implementing, and evaluating solutions to personnel issues related to teleworking.

III. PROCEDURES

A. Application for a Telework Schedule

An employee may apply for a telework schedule by submitting a Telework Request Form to his or her immediate supervisor.

B. Evaluating the Telework Application

The supervisor or other department designee may review the application and related documents, using guidelines provided in this procedure and department standards for performance.

Work appropriate to telework depends on job content, rather than job title, type of position, or work schedule. Jobs acceptable for telework are those that can be performed at an alternate work site without diminishing the quality of the work or disrupting the productivity of the office. There is no set of “correct” characteristics of telework-appropriate tasks.

Successful telecommuters usually have responsibilities (in part or full) where the individual works alone, for example:

- Accounting, financial analysis, or data analysis
- Report writing, editing, grant or case review
- Word processing or data entry or programming
- Research or planning
- Telephone-intensive work

Examples of work that may not be suitable telework include:

- Requires extensive face-to-face contact with supervisor, employees, clients, or general public
- Requires frequent access to material that cannot be moved from regular office
- Requires any special facilities or equipment
- Requires costly security outside the regular office
- Requires the performance of direct service for others, such as law enforcement, fire fighting, mail room service, supplies delivery, patient care
- Requires close supervision or on-the-job training

- Adds to the workload of other employees.

C. Approval of the Telework Schedule

If the telework schedule request is considered eligible for approval, then the following steps will be followed:

- A Self-Certification Safety Checklist for the Alternate Work Site is completed, signed, and dated by the employee.
- A Telework Agreement is completed, signed and dated by the employee.
- The supervisor or department designee reviews forms and, if approved, notifies the employee in writing that the telework schedule has been approved.

D. Managing the Telework Schedule

The following guidelines provide standards for use by the department in managing the telework employee and issues related to teleworking.

CHANGES TO APPROVED SCHEDULE: Business needs take precedence over telework days. An employee must forego teleworking if needed in the office on the regularly scheduled telework day.

ACCEPTABLE TELEWORK WORKSITE: The site requested as the employee's alternate work site must be approved in advance by the department supervisor. The employee must work at the designated headquarters when not at the alternate work site. The employee's supervisor shall ensure that the teleworker has an adequate work area when at the designated headquarters.

LENGTH OF TIME: Each department will determine the length of time appropriate for a telework agreement and state the term in the Telework Agreement.

SCHEDULING: Teleworkers need regular contact with supervisors and co-workers and access to specialized files and/or equipment. In addition, the supervisor and the teleworker must take actions to prevent the teleworker from becoming isolated from central office staff. Therefore, teleworkers are encouraged to spend a minimum of one day per week in the designated headquarters, except under unusual conditions.

TIME AND ATTENDANCE: Departments shall maintain a record of actual hours teleworked. Each department shall establish and follow an explicit procedure for documenting hours of work. Examples include:

- Verification by computer log-in and log-out times
- Employee documentation in calendar of actual begin and end time of work.

Documentation shall include time taken for breaks. Time sheet code for telework hours is **TLC**.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION: In general, Success Strategy Performance Review standards should remain the same whether an employee is performing work as a teleworker or works at the main office. The Success Strategy Performance Review standards may require some revision to ensure that they can be used as a basis of evaluation. Feedback meetings may be expanded to include more frequent meetings and/or review of the telework schedule to evaluate the effect of teleworking on performance.

Each teleworker agreement shall be discussed and renewed through the employee's Success Strategy Performance Review. Additional review may be required when there is a major job change (such as a promotion) or there is a change in supervisor.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT: Standards as defined by the City of Austin Personnel Policies apply in the telework relationship, to the alternate work site, and in all work done there on behalf of the City of Austin.

CONFIDENTIAL AND SENSITIVE INFORMATION: Teleworkers are expected to adhere to all City of Austin and department policies and procedures regarding security and confidentiality for the computer, its data and information, and any other information handled in the course of work.

HEALTH AND SAFETY: The City of Austin recognizes the importance of the health and safety of its employees, and will provide a safe and healthful environment in which to work. Likewise, teleworkers must provide a safe and healthful environment in which to work. Teleworkers must ensure that the alternate work sites meet acceptable standards, and must complete a self-certification safety inspection form.

If an employee incurs a work-related injury while teleworking, the employee must notify his or her Supervisor or department designee immediately.

E. Termination of Telework Schedule

The department may terminate the telework schedule or any individual telework agreement for any reason, at any time. Whenever feasible, such notice will be provided at least 30 calendar days prior to the termination of the schedule.

The opportunity to participate in a telework schedule is offered only with the understanding that it is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that a proper work environment is maintained. Dependent care arrangements must not interfere with work. Personal disruptions such as non-business telephone calls and visitors must be kept to a minimum. Failure to maintain a proper work environment, as determined by department management, may provide cause for termination of the telework schedule or agreement.

The participating employee may also request to terminate participation at any time. Management will make arrangements for the employee to begin working at the main office as quickly as possible, and when feasible, within 30 days of notification by the employee.

F. Renewal of Telework Schedules

The telework schedule shall be reviewed annually, at a minimum, through the Success Strategy Performance Review process. There is no automatic right of the teleworker to continue teleworking in the event of a change of supervisor. A supervisor has no authority to require an employee to telework.

IV. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Teleworker Request Form
- B. Self-certification Safety Checklist for Alternate Work Site
- C. Teleworking Agreement



City of Austin Telework
***Self-certification Safety Checklist
for Alternate Work Site***

Department:
Division:
Today's Date:

Employee Name: Alternate Work Address:
Please complete this safety checklist for your alternate work site.

SAFETY ASSESSMENT

Yes No

Workplace Environment		
Are temperature, noise, ventilation, and lighting levels adequate for maintaining your normal level of job performance?		
Are all stairs with four or more steps equipped with handrails?		
Is all electrical equipment free of recognized hazards that would cause physical harm (frayed wires, bare conductors, loose wires, flexible wires running through walls, exposed wires to the ceiling)?		
Are aisles, doorways, and corners free of obstructions to permit visibility and movement?		
Are file cabinets and storage closets arranged so drawers and doors do not open into walkways?		
Are the phone lines, electrical cords, and extension wires secured under a desk or alongside a baseboard?		
Is the office space neat, clean, and free of excessive amounts of combustibles?		
Are floor surfaces clean, dry, level, and free of worn or grayed seams?		
Are carpets well secured to the floor and free of frayed or worn seams?		
Is there adequate reading light?		
Is there a functional (UL Approved) smoke alarm/detector?		
Is there a readily accessible (UL Approved) fire extinguisher?		
I understand that Safety inspections may be made of my alternate work site with prior notice, except in the case of emergency.		

Employee
Signature: _____

Printed
Name: _____

Date: _____