



Telecommuting Policy

Effective: March 26, 2020

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide for a consistent application of telecommuting practices across City departments, to ensure the security of City information and systems, to manage Continuity of Operations, to reduce the environmental impact of commuting and to increase employee morale and satisfaction which will lead to increased work productivity.

Telecommuting is defined as allowing employees to work at an alternate location. Employees perform essentially the same work that they would in the central work place in accordance with their same performance expectations and other agreed upon terms. Telecommuting arrangements may be established for long-term or short-term periods.

Although many of the City's services are normally performed in City office facilities and require the presence of employees at a central work place, department heads have the authority to designate employees eligible for telecommuting or alternative work arrangements. While alternative work arrangements may meet the needs of both the department and the employee, the City Manager has the sole discretion to determine when this is appropriate. Exceptions to this policy require pre-approval of the City Manager and the Chief Information Officer.

II. Policy

Work performed in an alternative work location is considered official City business; therefore, departments shall maintain specific conditions that apply to employees engaged in telecommuting. Prior to beginning a telecommuting arrangement, a formal telecommuting agreement must be executed by both the employee and the department head.

III. Responsibility

There are a variety of issues which each department head and employee shall discuss before implementing a telecommuting agreement.

The amount of time the employee is expected to work will not change due to participation in a telecommuting agreement. Hours of work shall remain the same unless specified in the agreement. The employee agrees to apply her/himself to work during work hours. The procedures for leave approval shall all apply. Department heads must pre-approve in writing overtime for any non-exempt employee.

Failure on the part of the employee to meet all specified guidelines and procedures for a telecommuting policy will result in immediate termination of the telecommuting agreement.

A. Technology Services Department

- a. Manages the City's telecommunications and security infrastructure.
- b. Provides the resources for department staff to support telecommuters.
- c. Provides technical support and problem escalation for telecommuters through the City's Service Desk.
- d. Provides options for remote access users for accessing the City's data and telecommunication network.

B. Department Heads and Supervisors

- a. Implements telecommuting arrangements as practicable in their work areas and in accordance with the City's policies, procedures and guidelines.
- b. Provides department level support for telecommuters to include:
 - i. Approving or denying employee requests for telecommuting based on the suitability of the work, the employee and the work unit for telecommuting using the selection criteria as outlined in the procedures section.
 - ii. Reviewing and authorizing the required forms for approved telecommuting arrangements and technology requests.
 - iii. Providing an environment that is conducive to the telecommuting initiative, and providing scheduling and logistical support to telecommuters.
 - iv. Obtaining feedback from these groups regarding the impact of the telecommuting arrangement.
- c. Approves telecommuting schedule for employees.
- d. Reviews employee performance on a regular basis to ensure goals and expectations are met in a timely and efficient manner. Daily communication is preferred, but no less than weekly communication is required.
- e. Reviews and approves the telecommuting agreement.

C. Telecommuters

- a. Keeps informed of the City's telecommuting policy, and uses the telecommuting program forms.
- b. Remains accessible to customers, co-workers and supervisors; coordinates meetings with customers, co-workers, and supervisors in an efficient way so that it is not disruptive to the work environment.
- c. Structures telecommuting to be as transparent as possible to customers, co-workers and supervisors.
- d. Plans and organize tasks for telecommuting for efficiency and productivity.
- e. Tracks the work performed and communicates results as requested by the supervisor.
- f. Non-exempt employees will not work overtime unless it is pre-approved in writing by the department head.

- g. Develops, at a minimum, a proficiency in the use of the technology required for telecommuting.
- h. Only connect to his or her home network, ensuring the home router is properly secured, such that the factory-preset password has been reset and the encryption is set to WPA2 OR WPA3.
- i. Manages and operates a work phone for contact and communication; appropriate messaging must be established.
- j. Utilizes video conference software such as Skype to conference in during emergencies.
- k. Utilizes approved computer equipment for the purpose of telecommuting.
- l. Provides availability to come in as deemed necessary by supervisor/management within 2 hours; time spent commuting will not be considered part of the approved working hours and will not be reimbursed.
- m. Notifies supervisor for any change in status (e.g. loss of internet access, coming to work, requesting time off).
- n. Obtains supervisor concurrence before each telecommuting occurrence identifying the work tasks/activities to be accomplished and also reports back to the supervisor by the following workday the actual work completed.
- o. Maintains an appropriate telecommuting work area that considers ergonomics, safety, equipment, adequate workspace, noise and potential disruptions. The telecommuter's environment should minimize interruptions.
- p. Maintains dependent care, if applicable, and provides supervisor with a plan of providing care for dependents.
- q. Notifies supervisor immediately upon the event of a job-related incident or accident during telecommuting hours; the City does not assume responsibility for injury to any persons other than the telecommuter at the telecommuting site.
- r. Auto and homeowner's insurance is required and is the responsibility of the telecommuter.
- s. Refrains from holding business meetings with clients or customers, the public, or professional colleagues at his or her residence.
- t. Has completed the City's Security Training(KnowBe4).
- u. Completes the Telecommuting Agreement.

IV. Procedure

A. Selection and Enrollment

- a) Employees suited for telecommuting are solid performers who know the job and the department's goals and expectations. They can work independently, do not require close supervision and have good communication skills. They are reliable, disciplined and self-motivated.
- b) Work constituted as telecommuting involves some form of processing such as reading, writing, calculating, analyzing, designing, programming and managing data. A majority of the work products can be measured. Work duties that require on-site presence are predictable or can be scheduled.
- c) Work units suited to telecommuting have structure, clear work assignments that can be managed by performance results, cross-training, back-up plans and can operate smoothly when one or more employees are working off-site.
- d) The telecommuting agreement must be arranged so that there is no difference in the level of service provided to the supervisor, co-worker or customer and the location of the workplace is not noticeable to the supervisor, co-worker or customer.
- e) Employees telecommuting must meet at the minimum a proficiency measure on their employee evaluation.
- f) Department Management may suspend or discontinue the telecommuting arrangement at any time. Written notification of suspension of telecommuting arrangement will be provided to employee, supervisor and the Human Resources Director.
- g) Employees must complete the Telecommuting Agreement.

City of Gastonia Telecommuting Agreement

I am interested in telecommuting. I recognize that it is my responsibility to help ensure the success of the telecommuting arrangement. I recognize that if accepted into the program, I will not assume that the telecommuting agreement is permanent. I have read the Telecommuting Policy.

Name: _____

Title: _____

Supervisor: _____

Department/Division: _____

Email: _____

Date: _____

The following items have been identified as keys to a successful telecommuter. Please check the following items if they apply:

- ☐ I have sufficient portable work for at least one day of telecommuting per week.
- ☐ I have demonstrated ability to work independently, without close supervision.
- ☐ I am comfortable with technologies needed for telecommuting.
- ☐ I have effective communication with manager, co-workers and customers that will enable a relatively seamless transition from on-site to off-site.
- ☐ My telecommuting office space is safe and conducive to a productive work environment.
 - ☐ Files and documents will be protected from access by family members and others.
 - ☐ City-owned equipment will be protected from access by family members and others.
 - ☐ You will secure access to your computer when not in use for an extended period of time.
- ☐ My dependent care (i.e. child care, elder care or care of any other dependents) arrangements are in place. If a child or dependent is present during scheduled work hours, I agree to make arrangements for the care of that child or dependent.
- ☐ I have the ability to be flexible about the telecommuting arrangement, to respond within 2 hours on site to the needs of the customer, workgroup, workload and supervisor by adjusting my telecommuting schedule as requested.
- ☐ I acknowledge that I must have written approval from my supervisor/department head prior to working hours outside of the preapproved schedule.

Employee Name/Signature

Date

Employee Name/Supervisor

Date