

Teleworking Policy

Effective Date: Adopted May 14, 2002; Revised 3/2020,4/2020, 8/2020

§-I. PURPOSE

To provide the option of Teleworking to eligible employees as a workplace strategy to balance organizational objectives with employee well-being. Teleworking is a means for accommodating social distancing, increasing productivity, decreasing commute time, and providing an option for accommodating certain disabilities.

Teleworking is voluntary and requires cooperation and close coordination between the Telemanager and the Teleworker. Commitment of the Teleworker is imperative and directly related to the success of the program. Teleworking is a privilege and not an employee benefit, and can be revoked at any time. To help ensure that employees who wish to telecommute have demonstrated the qualities necessary to be successful working outside of the office, managers are encouraged to first consider those employees who have successfully completed a relevant working test period and/or who have worked for one (1) year.

During a closure under the Emergency Closure or Limited Operational Services Policy, all teleworking for nonessential personnel previously authorized under this policy is suspended for the duration of the closure. Essential personnel identified by the department director/elected official may be permitted to telework in such events and follow the provisions of this policy.

§-II. SCOPE

Candidates for teleworking must fulfill the following criteria:

- Employee must have/maintain an acceptable attendance record, and satisfactory performance.
- Employee must have a suitable home environment. The area must be free from distractions, have appropriate lighting and ventilation, and meet all required safety standards.
- Employee must have the ability to maintain office communication at all times through voice mail and/or email.
- Employee must sign and abide by the Teleworking Agreement.
- Any employee designated as an essential employee and authorized to telework by a department director/elected official during an LOS, departmental or facility closure or a declared emergency closure.

§-III. POLICY

Teleworking is the practice of allowing employees to work from home, a satellite office, or other remote work centers, rather than at an employee's standard work site.

§-IV. PROCEDURES

A. Definitions

Telemanager - is a manager that directly supervises the Teleworker. The Telemanager is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the program for each participant. If a problem arises that cannot be resolved, the Telemanager is responsible for termination of the teleworking agreement.

Teleworker - is an employee that is permitted to work from their home, or other suitable location, and he or she will be responsible for adhering to the guidelines of the Teleworking Policy which includes working at least the number of hours that will be paid for that day. A Teleworker's job may require that all or part of a teleworking day be forfeited due to priorities in the office. This priority will be determined by the Telemanager.

Cobb County is a government organization and public scrutiny should always be a concern for everyone in this program, it is imperative that the teleworker be sensitive to how the citizens perceive employee actions during a teleworking day.

B. Participation

Teleworking may not be suitable for all County positions/employees. Participation in the program will be at the discretion of the Department Head or Elected Official based on information provided in the Teleworking-Agreement.

Basic terms and conditions of employment apply to all Teleworkers. Teleworking does not change an employee's salary or benefits, job title, or job responsibilities. Teleworking hours, vacation, compensatory time, and paid overtime must be approved in advance by the Telemanager. All policies, practices and instructions of Cobb County Government remain in effect while the Teleworker is working at the remote location.

Teleworkers shall notify the Telemanager as soon as possible whenever illness or a personal emergency occurs on a Teleworking day. Sick, emergency or other leave usage shall be recorded by the Teleworker on the time record the day of occurrence.

Teleworking is not an alternative to child or elder care. Teleworkers shall make or maintain child care, adult care, or similar personal arrangements to permit concentration on work assignments during work hours. Decreases in productivity or behaviors that detract value from the county may result in immediate loss of teleworking status and may result in disciplinary action.

It is the responsibility of the Teleworker to take all precautions necessary to secure proprietary information and to prevent unauthorized access. The Teleworker is required to observe all office security practices to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of proprietary information. Steps to ensure the protection of proprietary information include, but are not limited to, use of locked file cabinets, flash drives and desks; regular password maintenance; and any other steps appropriate for the job and the environment. When teleworking, the Teleworker must comply with the county's IS Technology Acceptable Use Standards.

C. Equipment

All equipment used in Teleworking will be the responsibility of the Teleworker. The County will not provide service or maintain any equipment needed for Teleworking.

If personal equipment is used for teleworking, it must be configured to comply with the county's Information Technology Policy and Security Standards and meet the minimum requirements for accessing County systems and be approved by the County. Warranty and maintenance issues are the responsibility of the employee.

The specific equipment, supplies and other resources necessary for a Teleworking project or task shall be determined by consensus of the Teleworker and Telemanager. Should the equipment become inoperable or unavailable, the Teleworker is not excused from work commitments and may be required to return to the work site.

The County will not reimburse Teleworkers for the purchase of standard office supplies normally available at the work site. It is the responsibility of the Teleworker to gather and transport all necessary items for the completion of tasks assigned for Teleworking. The County will make no provisions for providing copiers or special telephone equipment. Upon approval by the Telemanager, necessary long-distance telephone call cost will be reimbursed to the Teleworker when the required documentation is provided.