

**CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS  
TELECOMMUTING PROCEDURES  
(Links to [Policy](#) and [Forms](#))**

**Governing Policy:** City of Minneapolis Telecommuting Policy

**Synopsis:** Establishes procedures, roles, and responsibilities and conditions for when department heads may authorize employees to telecommute.

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**Links to Related Regulations:**

**Administering Departments:** Human Resources

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## I. Roles and Responsibilities

All employees of the City of Minneapolis play important roles to ensure compliance with the Telecommuting Policy. City employees must perform the responsibilities as outlined below and in accordance with the procedures developed for this policy.

Role	Responsibility
Employees	1. Comply with the <u>City of Minneapolis Telecommuting Policy</u> and Procedures.
Human Resources Director	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with the City Attorney and Chief Information Officer to establish, manage, and modify procedures necessary to carry out and comply with the <u>City of Minneapolis Telecommuting Policy</u> in accordance with applicable laws, City ordinances, policies, and rules.</li> <li>2. Establish, manage, and modify procedures necessary to carry out and comply with the policy in accordance with applicable laws, City ordinances, policies and rules.</li> <li>3. Provide departments with information about employees who are telecommuting covered by this policy.</li> <li>4. Develop and maintain procedures for implementation and ongoing maintenance of the <u>Telecommuting Policy</u>.</li> <li>5. Determine the appropriate means of communicating the Policy and Procedures to all employees.</li> <li>6. Ensure the Human Resources Staff are carrying out their responsibilities.</li> </ol>
City Attorney	1. Work with the Human Resources Director to establish and modify procedures necessary to carry out and comply with the <u>City of Minneapolis Telecommuting Policy</u> and protect City assets in accordance with applicable laws, City ordinances, policies, and rules.
Department Heads and Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Understand and perform responsibilities as it pertains to the <u>Telecommuting Policy</u>. Administer items IV through IX of this document.</li> <li>2. Determine a chain of command approval process appropriate for the management structure and line of business.</li> <li>3. Identify functions that may be accomplished remotely and whether or not the employee needs full access to systems and applications.</li> <li>4. Predetermine which employees could be permitted to telecommute and what type of equipment he/she may need.</li> <li>5. Authorize employees to telecommute when conditions warrant and in accordance with applicable procedures and rules established for the <u>City of Minneapolis Telecommuting Policy</u>.</li> <li>6. Ensure that employees receive and sign the <u>Telecommuting Agreement Form</u> and/or the <u>Telecommuting Equipment Receipt</u>.</li> <li>7. Document the <u>Telecommuting Agreement</u>.</li> <li>8. Advise the Human Resources Director with the decision to authorize an employee to telecommute.</li> </ol>
COOP Coordinator	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Declare a citywide COOP event.</li> <li>2. Ensure that the work of the employees who are authorized to telecommute are critical to government continuity.</li> <li>3. Oversee the continuity of government authority, basic public safety services, and life safety services.</li> </ol>
Human Resources Generalist	1. Consult and provide assistance to Department Heads and Management when deciding to authorize an employee to telecommute during a COOP event.

## II. Purpose

To establish a Citywide system under which employees may be able to perform City work at locations other than their normal City work locations for the purpose of social distancing in the event of Continuity of Operation Planning (COOP) Level 2 for a facility closure with no alternative site identified or a Pandemic, World Health Organization (WHO) Level 4 (hereinafter "COOP event").

## III. Telecommuting

Telecommuting is the practice of an employee working at an alternate work site. Alternate work sites include homes, hotel (shared workstation) sites across the city, mobile work sites, or customer sites. Telecommuters generally use information technologies at the alternate work site. Telecommuting is not appropriate for all employees and no employee is entitled or guaranteed the opportunity to telecommute.

Telecommuting guidelines will include information relating to telecommuting (procedures and selection criteria, terms and conditions, equipment/supplies, workspace, inventory, liability and data privacy/security). The following all describe telecommuting arrangements:

- A. Telecommuter** – A telecommuter is an employee who works at a designated alternate work site on a regular basis. A regular basis is defined as at least 50% of the time working at the alternate work site. Telecommuters normally must agree to share a workstation (hotel) with at least one other worker.
- B. Occasional telecommuter** – An occasional telecommuter works at an alternate work site less than 50% of the time on a regular basis. Occasional telecommuters maintain their City work space and normally work on City laptops or their own computer equipment at the alternate work site.
- C. Mobile Employee** – As part of his/her job function, a mobile employee travels to meet and work on-site with clients/customers who are dispersed throughout the City. The assigned work site of a mobile employee may be his/her home or a central City office.
- D. Work at Home Employee** - This is a temporary, short-term arrangement, which may be approved by a supervisor for special projects or for special circumstances when the supervisor determines that the circumstance continues to meet the needs of customers, clients and the City.

## IV. Authority to Assign

Telecommuting may be approved by the Department Heads for periods up to 90 days and renewable each 30-day period thereafter during a COOP event. Department Heads should determine a chain of command approval process appropriate for their management structure and line of business.

Any current department level telecommuting agreements between employees and supervisors should be reauthorized, suspended, or terminated.

Supervisors may waive any current criteria established to determine who can telecommute and require that an employee telecommute to reduce social exposure that may endanger the employee.

Supervisors may request that an employee telecommute during a COOP event as an alternative to absence without pay. A request to telecommute shall be documented. Such documentation should occur within one week of the start of the agreement to telecommute or as soon as practicable. Supervisors may document the change in writing via email, memo, fax, etc.

Employees may initiate a telecommuting arrangement verbally or by submitting a written request to their immediate supervisor. If telecommuting is requested by an employee and denied by a supervisor, the supervisor is not required to provide an explanation of her/his reasoning for the denial.

**V. Telecommuting Agreement**

The Telecommuting Agreement, found in APPENDIX A, is the preferred method of documentation; however, less formal written documentation may be used.

**VI. Technology Requirements**

Departments should identify possible telecommuters as soon as possible and make the necessary technological arrangements.

**A.** The technology requirements are as follows:

1. If employees only need access to email, they can do it through any computer with no pre-planning necessary.
2. If employees need access to items on their home, department, or common drives, they will need to have a virtual private network (VPN) created in advance and use a City-issued computer.
  - a. Departments are encouraged to establish a VPN well in advance for employees that may need to telecommute. At the onset of a COOP event, the ability to add VPNs may be severely limited due to staff absences.
  - b. Departments can request a VPN for an employee through the Installs, Moves, Adds, and Changes (IMAC) process.
3. If employees need access to specific applications they may, depending on the application, be able to access them on any computer and without a VPN. Departments should check with Business Information Services in preparation for a COOP event to identify if a VPN is necessary and ensure appropriate employees have a VPN.

**B.** Departments should consider a broader use of telecommuting than they would for normal operations or other types of emergencies to accomplish social distancing for a COOP response, as appropriate.

**C.** Departments should identify essential functions that may be accomplished remotely and whether the person performing the function needs access to all systems and applications or only email and/or voice communications.

**D.** Departments should identify employees who are qualified for the provision of essential functions and determine their ability to telecommute and their current systems access.

**E.** Departments should consider alternative work schedules for those authorized to telecommute to reduce peak demands on technology systems.

**F.** Employees authorized for telecommuting may be allowed to provide limited dependent/child care during a COOP event if providing child care does not impact the ability of the employee to accomplish assigned tasks.

**G.** Departments should consider having a number of laptop computers that are loaded with necessary software that may be checked out on a COOP response basis by employees who do not already have the necessary equipment to telecommute.

**H.** Departments must recognize that equipment is limited, and employees should not expect to be provided a computer or equipment.

- I. Depending on the assignment, telecommuting assignments may be communicated in person, email, fax, text message, or telephone.

## VII. **Methods of Work**

There are a number of methods to accomplish telecommuting including:

- A. Via the World-Wide-Web, employees can access their email accounts from any computer with internet access. Authorized HR and Payroll Reps throughout the City, Boards, and Agencies may access HRIS via the internet for data entry. The City is not responsible for covering the cost of the employee's own monthly internet service. Employees cannot access other systems or applications within the City or view HRIS reports without a VPN access provided by the City/Agency.
- B. Teleconferencing allows for audio meetings to be heard with multiple attendees at different sites. This can be a subscription service where individuals call into a toll-free number and enter a password for the connection to others calling into the same meeting.
- C. Departmental-specific planning should be completed to ensure appropriate computer access is available to those employees identified as potential telecommuters.

Departments should consider the following criteria regarding equipment and supplies prior to a COOP event in deciding what City-owned equipment and phone lines will be provided to the telecommuter. Departments may provide additional equipment and/or phone lines at their discretion. Only those items deemed necessary to perform assigned work duties according to job function may be provided. The minimum recommended guidelines are outlined below, but may be waived in the event of a COOP event.

- A. The Telecommuting Equipment Receipt, found in APPENDIX B, is the preferred method of documentation to track City-owned equipment; however, less formal written documentation may be used.
- B. A telecommuter who works at an alternate site less than 50% of the time but is normally scheduled offsite at least one day a week and maintains his/her "personal" City work station:

The telecommuter may provide:

1. His/her own personal computer and software, or use a checkout laptop from their division.
2. His/her own office furniture.

The City may provide:

1. Computer security and communications software needed to perform job duties.
2. One phone line if requested and approved by the supervisor.
3. Appropriate office supplies.

- C. For the employee who telecommutes 50% to 80% of the time, he/she must agree to give up their "personal" City workstation, and the City may provide:

1. At least one phone line (more if needed by job function).
2. A personal computer, modem, and/or other required equipment.
3. Software needed to accomplish their job.
4. At least one lockable two-drawer file cabinet (if needed for data security).
5. Appropriate office supplies to complete job function.

D. For the employee who telecommutes 80% to 100% of the time and does not maintain a City workstation, the City may provide:

1. At least one phone line (more if needed for job function).
2. Personal computer, modem, and/or other required equipment.
3. Software needed to accomplish job function.
4. Office supplies needed to accomplish job function.
5. An ergonomic chair and table if requested (size of table to be determined by job).
6. At least one lockable two-drawer file cabinet (if needed for data security).

A telecommuter working at an alternate site more than 80% of the time will not have a designated workspace at the City. Each department may have a shared work area for use by telecommuters.

Equipment, software, and other supplies provided by the City remain the property of the City and are subject to the same business use restrictions as if located at the telecommuter's primary work site. No personal software may be loaded on City-owned equipment.

Each department will provide initial and on-going training on software and access issues. Initial training will include, but is not be limited to, initial set-up and loading of hardware and software, working at an alternate site experiences, and expectations.

The City will provide maintenance or repair of City-owned equipment and software. Each department must establish their own rules regarding transportation of equipment. Employee-owned equipment must be able to run current City software and applications. The City does not assume responsibility for any loss, damage, or wear to employee-owned equipment or furnishings.

Each department will provide appropriate technical support for hardware and software required for the telecommuter to perform their job duties.

### **VIII. Terms and Conditions of Employment**

- A. Telecommuting does not alter the basic terms and conditions of employment. The telecommuter's salary, benefits, and work status will not change only as a result of telecommuting.
- B. Telecommuters must continue to conform to all City of Minneapolis policies and rules, and in particular to those relating to use of City equipment, data privacy, computer security issues, and electronic communication.

### **IX. Employee Activities During Telecommuting**

Departments should consider the appropriateness of the following criteria regarding Liability and Data Privacy/Security when making telecommuting arrangements for a COOP event:

- A. Telecommuters may not conduct any client/customer meetings in their homes. Doing so will be cause for discontinuing the telecommuting arrangement.
- B. The City of Minneapolis shall have no liability to third parties for injuries or property damage occurring at the employee's home. Telecommuters remain responsible for such injuries and

damages and should consult with their Homeowner's or Renter's insurance agent to protect themselves.

- C.** Telecommuters are responsible for damage to City owned equipment and for filing a police report with their local police department for stolen City owned equipment. The supervisor should be consulted in the event of any damage to or loss of City property.
- D.** The employee is responsible for establishing a safe and secure work environment, for requesting an ergonomic review of the designated workspace, and for adhering to ergonomic guidelines. However, if the employee sustains an injury during the course and scope of performing assigned work responsibilities, the City of Minneapolis will provide Workers' Compensation benefits subject to its review of the injury and applicable law. The employee is obligated to provide prompt notice of an injury.
- E.** Telecommuters may not take work home that includes customer checks or cash due to inherent problems relating to delayed deposit, accountability, and increased risk. However, telecommuters may enter electronically cash receipts from receipt or remittance forms provided that checks and cash are not transported to the telecommuting site/location.
- F.** Data Privacy/Security: The legal status of all data used by the telecommuter remains unchanged by the telecommuter's participation in telecommuting.
- G.** Telecommuters will take all necessary precautions to secure and prevent unauthorized access to all data used in the performance of their work responsibilities and agree to follow all pertinent policies, laws, and rules regarding data privacy.
- H.** Documents, reports, data, or software products created as a result of work related activities are the property of the City and are subject to City policies and state law.
- I.** Handling and disposal of documents, reports, and data will be in accordance with state and federal law and the City of Minneapolis policy.

APPENDIX A

**Telecommuting Agreement**

**Employee Name:**

**Employee Home Address:**

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Home Phone:**

**Remote Work Location: Home — Other (specify):**

**Schedule: In office:**

**Remote Location:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (employee), have read, understood, and agree to adhere to the City of Minneapolis and department's Telecommuting Procedures and the approved proposal for telecommuting. A copy of the Procedures and the Telecommuting Policy are on the Intranet and can be accessed on the computer at the alternate work site. I will coordinate any deviation from the Procedures as soon as possible with my supervisor. Special circumstances are listed separately on an attached piece of paper (special division rules, conditions, etc.). I have discussed the telecommuting agreement, including scheduling days and hours of work, communications, employee/supervisory responsibility for work progress and monitoring work, the use of City of Minneapolis equipment, and data privacy with my supervisor. Telecommuters are responsible for damage to City owned equipment and for filing a police report with their local police department for stolen City owned equipment. The supervisor should be consulted in the event of any damage to or loss of city property. I understand that the telecommuting agreement may be terminated by either the city or me with reasonable notice to the other party. Upon termination, I will return all city-owned equipment to the city immediately.

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR THE CITY

Supervisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Manager Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



APPENDIX B

**Telecommuting Equipment Receipt**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (employee), have been issued the following City of Minneapolis owned equipment and access. I will abide with the Telecommuting Procedures as pertains to use of this equipment. Telecommuters must continue to conform to all City of Minneapolis policies and rules, and in particular to those relating to use of city equipment, data privacy, computer security issues, and electronic communication.

The following equipment is in my possession:

<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Model #</b>	<b>Serial #</b>	<b>Asset Tag #</b>
Personal Computer (Desk Top/Laptop)			
Monitor			
Air Card			
Modem			

Other Equipment (Check All That Apply):

- File Cabinet
- Trackball
- Table
- Chair
- Telephone (Including mobile phones)
- Telephone Headset
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR THE CITY

Supervisor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Manager Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_