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| Executive Office of Technology Services & Security (EOTSS)Commonwealth of Massachusetts |
| Owner: Jim Canavan, Secretariat Human Resource Director | Issued On: 9/21/2016 |
| Updated By: James Canavan | Updated: January 2018, July 2019 |
| Telecommuting Policy |

**Policy Statement:**

It is the policy of the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS) to facilitate, in appropriate circumstances, telecommuting opportunities for its employees.

**Purpose:**

Telecommuting is the use of telecommunications technology to work from any remote location. In most instances, telecommuting is the act of working from home or another location, thus eliminating travel to and from an office. Some jobs consist of tasks that could be accomplished while telecommuting one day per week or on an ad-hoc, project-specific basis. Generally, jobs suitable for telecommuting generally have defined tasks with clearly measurable results. Telecommuting does not change the work an employee is expected to perform or the hours one is expected to be working. Whether or not telecommuting is an option depends on the operational needs of an agency or operating unit.

There are several benefits and limitations of telecommuting.

Benefits may include:

* Increased productivity, including better time management and work quality
* Improved employee morale, including a better work/family balance
* Reduced traffic congestion and increased benefit to the environment

Limitations may include:

* The potential for distractions at home
* Reduced exposure and interaction with coworkers
* Lack of supervisory control

**Scope:**

This policy applies to employees of EOTSS.

**Program:**

Employee participation in telecommuting under this program is voluntary. Except as agreed to in this program, employee rights provided for in the employee’s collective bargaining agreement are not affected by participation in a telecommuting program. Rights or benefits provided under the employee’s collective bargaining agreement between the Commonwealth and the employee labor unions are neither enhanced nor abridged by the implementation of a telecommuting arrangement.

EOTSS has the sole discretion to determine whether to allow or continue a telecommuting program. The approval of one telecommuting request shall not create any rights or expectations that EOTSS will approve a subsequent request from the same employee or a request from a different employee in the same job function or classification. Denial of a telecommute request or cancellation of a telecommute arrangement is not subject to the grievance process.

**Eligibility:**

Telecommuting may not be suitable for all staff members or all positions.

Telecommuting may be permitted:

1. For a limited period of time
2. On an ad hoc, task/project basis
3. On a weekly basis of no more than one day per week.

Approval will be based solely on business/operating needs as determined by the Appointing Authority or his/her designee. Approval to telecommute on each occasion is contingent upon the submission of task plan, which shall include specifically identified assignments/work product to be completed during that time.

To be considered for participation in the Telecommuting Program, individuals must:

[ ]  Be an employee of EOTSS

[ ]  Have completed a minimum of six month’s employment at EOTSS

[ ]  Have received a rating of *meets* or *above* in each category of their latest evaluation

[ ]  Hold a position that has been determined by management to have job duties suitable for telecommuting

[ ]  Be able to work effectively in an isolated setting and without close supervision or any on-the-job training

[ ]  Be an organized, highly disciplined, conscientious, motivated self-starter who requires only minimal supervision and consistently meets or exceeds deadlines assigned to them

[ ]  Not supervise or manage employees who require close supervision

* Telecommuting is **NOT** a replacement for dependent care. Employees shall make arrangements for dependent care while telecommuting.
* Telecommuting is **NOT** intended to be used in place of vacation, sick, family and medical or other types of leave.
* For each day an employee telecommutes, the employee **MUST** document the work product to be completed for that day. This outline must account for a regularly scheduled day.

**Supervisor Responsibilities:**

Each business unit must maintain adequate physical presence and supervisory coverage, at the primary business location, during normal work hours.

All telecommute days, in any given week, will be determined and scheduled by the immediate supervisor. The level of service provided must not be impaired by telecommuting and alternate work schedules. Changes in work schedules or temporary telecommuting assignments may be made at EOTSS’s discretion based on operational needs.

In terms of employee supervision, clear expectations and measurable tasks must be considered when evaluating a telecommute request. Supervisors must review and approve the outline of assignments/work product to be performed for each instance of telecommuting. Supervisors of telecommuting employees shall supervise the work product produced by employees on telecommuting days to ensure appropriate levels of employee accountability.

**Hours and Days of Telecommuting:**

* **20% Rule:** Full-time employees may not work more than 20% of their work schedule on any given telecommute day. For employees who work a five-day schedule, they may telecommute up to one (1) day as long as that does not exceed 20% of their work schedule.
* **Holidays:** Telecommute days may be suspended during week(s) in which a holiday falls, unless it has determined that the level of service supports the telecommuting.
* **HR/CMS**: The telecommuter will follow timekeeping and reporting requirements established by EOTSS. Specifically, telecommuting employees shall timely enter data in the current time and attendance reporting system for telecommuting days in the same manner as they enter such data for non-telecommuting days.
* **Timely Response:** The telecommuter must be available during their scheduled work hours and answer email and voicemail in a timely manner throughout the day, except when a later shift is permitted based on operational needs. Telecommuters must leave contact information for his/her supervisor.
* **Weather Emergency:** Individuals who are permitted to telecommute are expected to work during weather emergencies regardless of the day if directed by their manager. If a weather emergency, or other office closure, occurs during any scheduled work day, the telecommuter must be available to work during the scheduled work hours as the telecommuter is equipped to work and the ability to work would not have been affected by the weather.
* **Mandatory Meetings**: The operations of the Agency shall not be curtailed by telecommuting arrangements. Telecommuting arrangement may need to be suspended to accommodate operating needs. Mandatory meetings, which require the employee’s physical presence, are such an example. In such instances the employee, who telecommutes on the day of the meeting, will be expected to come into the work location specified and not telecommute. Additionally, telecommuters may not decline mandatory meetings requiring an on-site presence to accommodate their preference to telecommute. Where operationally feasible, an alternative day may be granted for telecommuting during that week. Advance notice of such meetings will be given to the extent possible.
* **Overtime:** Overtime is any time worked over 37.5 hours. Overtime must be authorized in advance by management. Requests for any eligible compensatory time off must be authorized by management in advance.

**Equipment and VPN Access:**

Consistent with EOTSS’s Remote Access and VPN Policy, EOTSS will provide access to and support for VPN and the network. VPN users will be able, in most cases, to access the same applications and data as they would in their office. The telecommuter will be responsible for providing connectivity to the internet at their remote location, as well as maintenance and support. The network, device, VPN, and EOTSS applications and data are Commonwealth Information Technology Resources (ITRs). Work products and programs developed by the telecommuter while telecommuting, whether created using ITRs or the telecommuter’s software, hardware or other equipment, remain the property of EOTSS.

At the sole discretion of management, and subject to the availability, telecommuters may be provided with equipment (i.e., laptop, portable PC) for purposes of telecommuting. If a telecommuter is provided with equipment, the “Offsite Equipment Use Policy” must be signed, approved by the immediate supervisor/manager and submitted to EOTSS.

Commonwealth equipment and services are to be used for state business only. The use of ITRs shall be in accordance with the EOTSS’s Acceptable Use Policy with respect to the responsibilities of the employee, acceptable and unacceptable uses of ITRs, data confidentiality, copyright protection, computer viruses, network security, email, and employee expectations of privacy.

Subject to the terms of EOTSS’ VPN Policy, installation, maintenance, repair or replacement of employee owned equipment and software is the responsibility of the employee. In the event of ITR malfunction, connectivity, the telecommuter must contact their supervisor within 30 minutes. If repairs will take some time, the telecommuter may be required to report to a work location specified by EOTSS until the ITR is usable. In all cases, whether the malfunction is caused by issues with EOTSS ITRs or the user’s connectivity, the telecommuter must make up the time lost due to the malfunction as soon as possible following such event.

**Safety and Security:**

The telecommuter must maintain a proper and safe work environment. A proper and safe work environment is defined as taking care to ensure that home office equipment (computers, printers, fax machines, lighting) do not overload electrical circuits, that circuit breakers and surge protectors are used when necessary, and that office space access is unobstructed and clear of debris and electrical cords. In entering into the terms of a telecommuting arrangement the employee consents and EOTSS retains the right to make an on-site inspection of the designated workspace at a mutually agreed upon time.

The telecommuter is responsible for the safety and security of EOTSS’ equipment, software, data and supplies in accordance with EOTSS’ guidelines.

**Costs:**

EOTSS is **NOT** responsible for any costs incurred as a result of telecommuting. This includes:

* Damages to the telecommuter’s property
* Maintenance or repairs of privately-owned equipment
* Utility costs associated with the use of the computer or occupation of the home (e.g., electricity, personal phone usage, long-distance phone bills, dial-up access fees, etc.)
* Connectivity (i.e., the telecommuter’s access to the internet through a commercial service such as Verizon)
* Equipment supplies
* Travel expenses associated with commuting to the central office

**Contact:**

EOTSS’ Telecommuting Coordinator is responsible for providing employees with policy information, including:

* Monitoring the overall telecommuting policy
* Ensuring compliance with the policy
* Auditing the use of the telecommuting policy
* Addressing questions regarding the policy

Additionally, any temporary modification or change to the designated telecommuting day(s) must be mutually agreed upon in advance by the telecommuter and the supervisor, and documented in an email from the supervisor to the employee with a copy to the Telecommuting Coordinator specifying the schedule change and the manner in which the supervisor approved such change.

**Termination:**

Either party may terminate a telecommuting arrangement at any time if continuation would not be productive, efficient or otherwise not in the agency’s best interest.

**Telecommuting Program Request Form:**

**Section I.** The employee must complete this section and submit to their supervisor for approval.

**Employee Name:** Click here to enter text.

**Job Title:** Click here to enter text.

**Division:** Click here to enter text.

Review the attached policy, which outlines the requirements for telecommuting. Once you have read the policy, acknowledge and indicate your agreement for each of the following:

[ ]  By participating in the Telecommuting Program, I understand and will adhere to the attached guidelines of the Telecommuting Program. If I violate the Telecommuting Program, I may lose future telecommuting rights and be subject to disciplinary action.

[ ]  While telecommuting, I will not provide primary care for children or elders who would otherwise require a provider’s care.

[ ]  I agree that I will be available to work during declared weather emergencies.

[ ]  I will comply with all provisions of EOTSS’ Remote Access and VPN Policy, including EOTSS’ rules regarding the security and confidentiality of Commonwealth data and information.

[ ]  I will comply with the EOTSS Acceptable Use Policy with respect to the Commonwealth’s Information Technology Resources when telecommuting.

[ ]  I agree and understand that my supervisor, or his/her designee, may enter my residence with notice during my scheduled work hours for the purposes of evaluating my designated workspace where my telecommuting occurs.

[ ]  I understand and agree that any telecommuting arrangement is not guaranteed and may be ended at the discretion of the Appointing Authority.

**Describe the reason(s) for the telecommuting request. Include specific tasks that may be completed while telecommuting.**

Click here to enter text.

**Identify your telecommuting work location/address and requested day of the week.**

Click here to enter text.

**Indicate whether EOTSS has provided any equipment for telecommuting purposes** (e.g., laptop, docking station, etc.).

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| **Item Description**  | **Asset Number** |
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**Employee e-Signature:** Click here to enter text.

**Date:** Click here to enter text.

**Approval Status**

**Section II.** The employee’s supervisor must complete this section. After the approval, the form must be emailed to the Telecommuting Coordinator.

**Approval Status:**

[ ]  Approved

*Justification:* Click here to enter text.

[ ]  Denied

*Justification:* Click here to enter text.

**Supervisor e-Signature:** Click here to enter text.

**Date:** Click here to enter text.

**Task Log**

**Section III.** The employee’s supervisor may complete this section for purposes of a task log. This log may also be in the form of an email. After approval, the form must be retained for reference.

**Telecommuting Date(s):** Click here to enter text.

In accordance with my telecommuting obligations I hereby plan to complete the following tasks while telecommuting on the date(s) referenced above:

Click here to enter text.

**Supervisor e-Signature:** Click here to enter text.

**Date:** Click here to enter text.