

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
On-line Policies & Procedures Manual
COUNTY TELEWORKING POLICY

Activated – March 2011

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Policy

Teleworking is an arrangement in which employees are permitted the flexibility of working at an alternative work site for all or some portion of a work week, or in many cases intermittently. A teleworking arrangement can also include flexibility in the hours worked, as long as those hours do not violate any laws, regulations, policies, or contractual obligations.

The Teleworking Policy is part of the County of Santa Barbara's Mobile Workforce Program which is intended to reduce the County's and its employees' "carbon footprint" in an accountable, customer-focused, and efficient manner. The County of Santa Barbara supports the increased and appropriate use of teleworking arrangements and considers teleworking to be of value to both the County and teleworking employees as it:

- Helps the County attract and retain diverse employees to the workforce by providing appealing and flexible work location arrangements;
- Decreases the number of days employees commute or engage in unnecessary work-related vehicle trips by employing "greener" workforce mobility solutions to positively impact the environment thereby reducing the employer's and employee's carbon footprint;
- Reduces or eliminates office space needs and associated overhead costs to maximize efficiency and manage escalating costs;
- Can increase productivity and achieve overall cost savings for the County and/or its customers;
- Reduces peak-hour traffic congestion;
- Increases employment opportunities for those with restricted mobility or disabilities; and
- Ensures the continuity of government by expanding work site alternatives during emergency situations.

Though not all jobs and not all individuals are suitable for teleworking, the County of Santa Barbara is committed to increasing the use of teleworking for work assignments and individuals well-suited for a part-time or full-time teleworking arrangement. In addition, some jobs that may not be suitable for ongoing teleworking may benefit from a sporadic or project-specific teleworking arrangement. The County's goal is to increase the number of teleworking hours throughout the County by 5% by the end of the calendar year 2011, and an additional 5% each of the following two fiscal years. Teleworkers will be required to code their teleworking time on their timesheets in order to track and report to the Board of Supervisors regarding the increased degree to which the workforce is teleworking.

Principles

- Teleworking is a cooperative arrangement between a department and its employees based on the suitability of both the job and the employee for a teleworking arrangement.
- Teleworking agreements are voluntary, joint decisions between the department and employees, and may be terminated by either the department or the employee at any time. Departments will not terminate teleworking agreements for arbitrary or capricious reasons.
- Teleworking is neither a right nor an entitlement, but a tool to allow flexible work options.
- Terms and conditions of employment with the County of Santa Barbara remain the same regardless of work site.
- Teleworking will not adversely affect an employee's eligibility for advancement or promotion, or any other employment rights or benefits.
- Equipment and materials provided by the County for use at home or an alternate location remain the property of the County. Teleworkers must take the necessary steps and precautions to safeguard County equipment and materials. The County is not responsible for the cost or maintenance of any equipment/materials purchased by an employee for the teleworking arrangement unless prior approval is obtained.
- The primary measure of successful teleworking is the **results** produced by the teleworker. Teleworkers and their supervisors should agree in advance on the work to be accomplished during the teleworking period and the quality expected. Teleworkers will be expected to communicate with their supervisors if anything occurs during teleworking that prevents them from achieving the agreed upon results. Where a department already has in place technology, criteria, or processes to track productivity or output, these tools should be used as they would if the employee were working on site.

Goals

- To attract and retain highly-motivated employees committed to providing quality customer service from any work location;
- To reduce commuting and traffic thereby reducing the County's carbon footprint and improving air quality;
- To promote the efficient use of resources and technology;
- To increase the effective use of individual work time and overall job satisfaction;
- To decrease costs and increase productivity while maintaining a high level of customer service (for both internal and external customers); and
- To reduce office space needs and overhead costs to achieve cost savings for the organization.

Selection Criteria

Five selection criteria should be considered when assessing the suitability of a teleworking arrangement: 1) the characteristics of the culture of the organization, 2) the job, 3) the individual, 4) the supervisor, and 5) the proposed work site.

1. Organizational Culture Characteristics

A successful teleworking arrangement relies on an organizational culture that supports a different way of viewing employees, the work performed by employees, how, where, and when work is done, and how employees are supervised. This requires department leadership to support a culture that:

- Inspires supervisors and managers to manage by objectives and outcomes rather than by observation;
- Maximizes the movement away from a face-to-face culture;
- Removes unnecessary obstacles from teleworking arrangements;
- Looks at jobs and the people doing those jobs from a modern, progressive business perspective;
- Is committed to moving away from the concept of "dedicated" office and work space for all employees; and

- Designs and implements strategies to invest in technology, equipment, and alternate work sites for a strong teleworking culture.

2. Job Characteristics

A variety of jobs will be found to be suitable for a teleworking arrangement. Some jobs may require the individual to work from a dedicated work space in the home or an alternate location while others will be found to be flexible enough that the teleworker can work from virtually anywhere. Still others may allow the employee to work from the field without reporting to any specific work location. Some jobs may require the teleworker to work specific work hours while others will allow for a flexible arrangement that differs from the employee's normal work schedule, while ensure compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

The following should be considered in evaluating the suitability of a job for teleworking:

- The extent to which the job or parts of the job can be done at an alternate location (for example, a "post position" with walk-in customers requires the individual to be in a specific location for a specific number of hours; however, a case worker reviewing case files and updating client records may be able to perform those duties from an alternate location);
- The extent to which communication requirements can be achieved through telephone, cell phone, voice mail, email, scanning/faxing, web-based meetings, etc. at a minimum cost to the County, rather than requiring face-to-face communication;
- The extent to which the job includes elements that allow employees to work independently performing tasks such as writing, editing, reading, planning, designing, researching, making telephone calls, scheduling, file review, case management, troubleshooting, complaint resolution, report compilation, computer programming, word processing, and data entry;
- The extent to which outcomes, outputs, and work products can be clearly defined and measured ; and
- The extent to which special equipment or resources are required and can be provided by either the employee or the department.

In addition, a job suitable for teleworking would be one that does not disrupt the delivery and quality of service (to either internal or external customers) and does not require more time or cost to complete work remotely than it would in the normal work setting. In fact, an overarching goal of a teleworking arrangement should be to achieve increased productivity and reduced costs.

3. Teleworker Characteristics

The best teleworkers are self-starters in nature, committed to producing quality and timely results, self-disciplined, highly motivated, and comfortable working alone. Other important characteristics include:

- Successful/satisfactory performance;
- Ability to work with little or no direct supervision;
- Demonstrated ability to achieve performance objectives and meet or beat deadlines;
- Maintaining good working relationships and communication with supervisor and co-workers; and
- Demonstrating a desire to telework and to make the teleworking arrangement work.

4. Supervisor Characteristics

The role of the supervisor is the fourth criterion essential to the success of a teleworking arrangement. Supervisors must possess the following traits and skills:

- A commitment to making the teleworking arrangement successful;
- Good leadership skills, flexibility in leadership style, and ability to manage by results (rather than by the clock or observing the employee at work);
- Ability to assist the employee in planning the work that will be accomplished while teleworking;
- Ability to provide clear performance feedback; mutual trust and respect with the teleworker; and a facilitator of open communication;
- Ability to establish and communicate clear performance objectives and desired outcomes for the teleworker; and
- The flexibility to view the work and how and where it is done differently than the traditional workplace model.

Supervisors must be held accountable for developing the necessary skills, perspective, and culture in their units/divisions that supports a successful teleworking program.

5. Remote Site-Related Criteria

Depending on the specific teleworking arrangements that are made, some or all of the following should be taken into consideration:

- Adequate work space with appropriate lighting;
- Computer equipment, software, and other equipment/resources;
- Security or confidentiality issues;
- Ensuring minimal non-work related interruptions for the teleworker; and
- A safe and secure off-site work environment.

Management Guidelines

1. Teleworking is a voluntary arrangement and may be terminated by the employee, supervisor, or department head. Non-selection or revocation of participation is at the discretion of the appointing authority or his/her designee.
2. If an employee requests to terminate a full-time teleworking arrangement, management will arrange for the employee to resume working in the office as quickly as possible, but no later than 30 days after notification by the employee. Management will provide an employee with as much advance notice as feasible when terminating an employee's teleworking arrangement.
3. Management determines whether teleworking is appropriate, based upon work requirements. When those with a teleworking arrangement return from a leave of absence or after a transfer from one assignment to another, management may reassess the suitability of a teleworking arrangement.
4. Teleworking arrangements shall not be terminated for arbitrary or capricious reasons. The decision to terminate a teleworking arrangement is not appealable or grievable.
5. Teleworkers and their supervisors remain obligated to comply with all County of Santa Barbara rules, regulations, policies, procedures, MOU provisions, and the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The County's Acceptable Use Policy is fully applicable to teleworking arrangements. The violation of any of the above or the misuse of County time or any County-provided equipment may result in exclusion from the teleworking arrangement and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Any questions related to teleworking schedules, as they apply to FLSA or other labor relations issues, are to be referred to the department's Human Resources professional, HR Business Center manager, or CEO/Human Resources.

6. Teleworking generally occurs on a part-time or periodic basis and is agreed upon with the teleworker's department. Requests to work overtime or use leave balances (i.e., sick, vacation, compensatory time, administrative leave, or other types of leave) must be pre-approved by the teleworker's supervisor in the same manner as when working in the office.
7. The duties, obligations, and responsibilities of a teleworker are not changed by teleworking. The employee's salary, retirement, benefits, and insurance coverage does not change as a result of teleworking.
8. Teleworkers will be accessible during the agreed-upon regular business hours, regardless of work location, and as defined by the teleworker and his/her supervisor. Arrangements for flexible work schedules are subject to supervisor's approval. Teleworkers and their supervisors must agree on how the teleworker will ensure accessibility to departmental staff, and the expected response time for returning phone calls or emails. The teleworker will provide a contact number to his/her supervisor, as well to other essential departmental staff.
9. The teleworker's home address and telephone number will remain confidential and will not be released to the public or any unauthorized persons.
10. Teleworkers who work at home will have a designated work space agreed to by the supervisor and maintained by the teleworker. Teleworkers will be responsible for the ergonomics of their remote offices as well as maintaining a safe condition free from hazards. Failure by the teleworker to maintain a home office that is safe, ergonomically sound, and free from distraction so as not to interfere with work, as determined by management, provides cause for terminating an employee's teleworking arrangement. For safety compliance purposes, with at least 24-hours advance notice (written or verbal), an official representative of the County may request the employee to provide photographs of the work area.
11. In the case of job-related accidents or injuries that occur during teleworking, employees agree to allow an immediate inspection by the County as well as follow-up inspections and investigations at the teleworking site as needed.
12. The teleworker must ensure that dependent care is provided in such a way that the teleworker successfully achieves agreed-upon performance results and outcomes and within the agreed-upon work hours.
13. Teleworkers will need to take a serious approach to the job when working from home. It is essential that people in the home are trained to understand what teleworking means and refrain from interrupting the teleworker during work hours.
14. Teleworkers will not change work locations or hours without prior approval.

15. With the exception of lunch and break periods, teleworkers agree to dedicate teleworking time to legitimate business purposes and will not engage in activities that have not been approved by their department during teleworking hours.
16. Teleworkers will take all precautions necessary to secure privileged/confidential information and prevent unauthorized access to any County of Santa Barbara systems or data.
17. Teleworkers may need equipment such as a computer, modem, printer, FAX, or telephone line, as well as ergonomic workstations, chairs, etc. The department head at his/her discretion, may provide employees with such equipment/furnishings and/or may pay for telecommunications expenses. If the County agrees to provide the equipment/furniture at the County's expense, then such equipment/furniture will remain the property of the County of Santa Barbara. The parties will inventory and make record of all County property assigned to a teleworker. County property assigned to a teleworker must be returned to the County within two (2) working days of the termination of a teleworking arrangement.
18. The employee is responsible for maintaining and repairing employee-owned teleworking equipment at personal expense and on personal time. The County is responsible for maintaining, repairing, and replacing County-owned equipment issued to teleworkers. In the event of equipment malfunction, the teleworker must notify his/her supervisor immediately. If repairs will take some time, the department will find alternative means to continue the teleworker's work, including asking the teleworker to report to the main office until the equipment is usable. The County is not responsible for operating costs, home office set up or furnishings, home maintenance costs, or any other incidental costs (i.e. electricity) associated with the use of the employee's residence for teleworking.
19. Except for inspections, delivery and pick-up of work materials, equipment maintenance, and receipt of work assignments, employees are prohibited from conducting face-to-face County business at the teleworking site without written authorization from his/her department head or designee.
20. When the employee is **not** teleworking, travel to the employee's primary employment location is **not** considered work time and does not qualify for mileage reimbursement. Calling an employee into the primary work location from the teleworking site, after the work day has begun, **is** considered work time and claims for mileage reimbursement will be handled in accordance with County policy. When in doubt, please contact a Human Resources representative for assistance.
21. Tax implications related to the home work space are the responsibility of the employee. Teleworkers are advised to discuss any issues with their tax advisor.

22. The County's Worker's Compensation liability for job-related accidents will continue to exist during the employee's teleworking work hours. Any work-related injury should be immediately reported to the teleworker's supervisor.
23. The teleworker remains liable for injuries to third persons and members of the employee's family on the employee's premises. The County of Santa Barbara is not liable for damage to the employee's real property.
24. Teleworking expenses not specifically covered in this policy will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis between the employee and the department.
25. Teleworkers and their departments will jointly sign an agreement that can be terminated at any time by either the department or the employee.
26. Teleworkers and supervisors should identify specific goals, completion dates, and measurements for success. Both the teleworker and the supervisor have the responsibility for ensuring tasks are completed in the same quality manner and with the same timeliness commensurate to the work done in the office.
27. Each teleworking arrangement must be mutually agreed upon by the department and the employee.
28. The department may, at any time, change any or all of the conditions under which employees are permitted to telework. The arrangement will not be terminated by the department for arbitrary or capricious reasons.

Timekeeping, Reporting, and Liability

All County of Santa Barbara policies regarding attendance and hours worked also apply to teleworking employees.

The teleworker and his/her supervisor should agree on a work schedule. Unless a different work schedule is designated, teleworkers are assumed to be available and working during their regular work hours.

Only travel specifically authorized by the teleworker's supervisor will be considered business travel eligible for reimbursement. Establishing a remote work location in the teleworker's home does not make the teleworker's regular commute to his/her primary employment location on non-teleworking days a business trip.

Teleworkers will code all hours spent teleworking as TLC on their bi-weekly timesheets in addition to recording their regular work hours to REG. The TLC code will be used, not to instruct pay, but to track teleworking hours for regular reporting to the Board of Supervisors and to ensure goals are met.

Overtime

It is understood that employees may sometimes be required to work beyond the customary 40 hours per week to ensure successful completion of job responsibilities. This applies to teleworkers as well as onsite employees. For all employees who are not exempt under the FLSA and who are entitled to pay or compensatory overtime, ***overtime work must be pre-authorized by the supervisor.*** It is recommended that this authorization is obtained in writing.

Performance Guidelines

Supervisors will be most successful supervising a teleworker when, in advance of the teleworking arrangement, he/she meets with the teleworker to discuss the work to be completed, the time in which it is expected to be completed, and how outcomes will be measured. That discussion and ensuing agreement should include the following, as appropriate to the specific job:

- How long the employee will be teleworking and during what hours;
- The specific work to be completed including defining the results, the expected quality, and the timeframe for completion;
- The measurements that will be used to verify levels of productivity;
- Where the work will be performed;
- How equipment/resources will be provided;
- Standards for ensuring privacy and confidentiality;
- Prioritizing work by identifying those results most critical and those that can be deferred;
- Expectations regarding the work environment in which the employee will be working;
- Standards for communicating with the supervisor, other staff, and customers while teleworking; and
- Identifying means for resolving challenges/obstacles to completing agreed-upon outcomes.

The teleworker's job expectations and measurements should be comparable to the expectations that would be set if the individual was working in the office. Exceeding, meeting, or not meeting those expectations should be addressed through the performance management and performance evaluation process.

Teleworker Safety

Depending on the type of teleworking arrangements, some or all of the following safety measures may be required, and will be mutually agreed upon by the department and the teleworker:

- The teleworker provides a separate, clearly defined work space that is kept neat and orderly;
- Desk, chair, and computer that are of appropriate design and arranged so there is no strain on any part of the body;
- Exits and pathways are free of obstructions;
- Work area is adequately illuminated;
- Work area is appropriately ventilated and heated;
- Surge protectors are used for computers, fax machines, and printers;
- Computer components are kept out of direct sunlight;
- Storage is organized to minimize risk of injury;
- Emergency phone numbers are posted or accessible in the work area;
- Smoke detectors are installed and batteries are charged;
- Portable fire extinguishers are easily accessible and serviced as needed; and
- A first aid kit is easily accessible and periodically replenished as needed.

Security

Data and information used by teleworkers must be treated with the same caution and respect that confidential material is given in the office. The teleworker should be particularly aware of the following areas regarding security:

1. Any and all papers with confidential information must be treated with care and be safeguarded from all family members and/or visitors to the teleworking site;
2. Any confidential data stored on a computer at the employee's home must be protected;

3. Employees accessing confidential data electronically must take every precaution to ensure that onlookers cannot view the data on their computers;
4. If the employee will be transferring data from a computer located at home to one located at the office, the employee must take precautions not to spread computer viruses from home to the office;
5. The employee must protect any passwords or secure access devices associated with the County's computer system;
6. Teleworkers must ensure family members and visitors do not use County equipment and that teleworkers use County equipment in compliance with the County's Acceptable Use Policy;
7. Teleworkers who purchase their own computers for the purpose of performing work duties during teleworking hours must seek advice from their departmental information technology contact or the Information Technology Services prior to purchasing their computers to ensure the equipment will be adequate and compatible with County standards; and
8. Teleworkers should be aware that, if they use a personal computer to conduct County business, documents on those computers can be subpoenaed for legal matters and may be deemed "public records."

Procedure for Implementing a Teleworking Arrangement

1. Any supervisor or manager, with the consent of the department head or designee, may initiate discussions with employees occupying suitable jobs to discuss a teleworking arrangement. In addition, these discussions can be conducted with prospective employees who may be more inclined to accept employment with a more flexible job arrangement.
2. The supervisor may require the requesting employee to complete and submit a Teleworking Proposal that includes the following:
 - a. A proposed teleworking schedule;
 - b. The work the employee proposes to complete while teleworking;
 - c. A description of how any office coverage needs will be met;
 - d. A proposed off-site location where he/she will be conducting business; and
 - e. A documented estimate of the potential cost to the County, if any.

Attached to this policy is a *Teleworking Proposal and Checklist* that can be used for this purpose.

3. The supervisor will meet with the employee in a timely manner to discuss the proposal.
4. If the supervisor finds the request to be appropriate for a teleworking arrangement, he/she will obtain department head or designee approval and proceed to meet with the employee to plan for performance, outcomes, communication protocols, and measurements.
5. Once approved for teleworking, the supervisor will ensure that the employee completed the teleworking orientation and working-at-home safety programs.
6. The department or the employee can terminate the agreement for any reason at any time.
7. All teleworking hours will be appropriately coded on timesheets (TLC) for tracking and reporting purposes.

**COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
TELEWORKING PROPOSAL AND CHECKLIST**

Teleworking Proposal

A. The following can be completed and submitted to the supervisor as the employee's Teleworking Proposal.

- Dates employee proposes to telework (may be specific dates or recurring planned day(s) to telework):

- Work hours the employee proposes to work while teleworking:

- The specific work to be completed while teleworking:

- The location at which work will be performed:

- The equipment/resources that will be needed and who will provide those resources:

8. An estimate of the potential cost to the County, if any:

9. If relevant, describe how office coverage needs will be achieved while you are teleworking:

10. I have read and agree to abide by the County's Acceptable Use Policy while teleworking.

9. I understand that if I am using my own computer to conduct County business, documents on my computer can be subpoenaed for legal matters and may be deemed "public records."

10. I understand that this arrangement may be modified or revoked by either party as described in the Teleworking Policy.

B. The supervisor and employee should also discuss and *jointly* agree upon the following once the teleworking arrangement is approved:

- The expected results, quality, and the timeframe for completion of work:

- Measurements that will be used to verify productivity:

- Expectations for ensuring privacy and confidentiality:

- Prioritize work – identify the most critical results to be achieved:

- Expectations regarding the work environment in which the employee will be working:

- Expectations for communicating with the supervisor, other staff, and customers while teleworking:

- Means for resolving challenges/obstacles to completing the agreed-upon outcomes:

11. Other expectations: _____

12. Other expectations: _____

13. Other expectations: _____

14. Other expectations: _____

C. Checklist for Successful Teleworking - The supervisor and employee should review the following checklist and check all that are applicable to the teleworking arrangement.

- Employee will provide a separate, clearly defined work space that is kept neat and orderly.
- Employee to provide appropriate work space with adequate lighting.
- Employee/employer to provide computer equipment, software, and other equipment/resources.
- Employee will ensure minimal non-work related interruptions while teleworking.
- Employee will ensure a safe and secure off-site work environment.
- Employee will provide a desk and chair that are of appropriate design and arranged so there is no strain on any part of the body.
- Employee will maintain exits and pathways that are free of obstructions.
- Employee will keep work area appropriately ventilated and heated.
- Employee will use surge protectors for computers, fax machines, and printers.

- Employee will keep computer components out of direct sunlight.
 - Employee will keep emergency phone numbers posted or accessible.
 - Employee will ensure the work area has working smoke detectors.
 - Employee will ensure accessible portable fire extinguishers are in the teleworking location and will service them as needed.
 - Employee will maintain an easily accessible and fully-stocked first aid kit.
 - Employee will provide pictures of the teleworking work area, furnishings, and equipment by (date): _____
11. Any and all papers with confidential information must be treated with care and be safeguarded from all family members and/or visitors.
 12. Any confidential data stored on a computer must be protected.
 13. Employee will take every precaution to ensure that onlookers cannot view the data on computers being used for work purposes.
 14. If transferring data from a computer located at home to the office, the employee take precautions ensure no computer viruses are spread.
 15. Employee will keep confidential any passwords or secure access devices associated with the County's computer system.
 16. Ensure family members and visitors do not use County equipment.
 17. If the employee is using his/her own computer for performing work duties, he/she will seek assistance from IT staff to ensure the equipment is adequate and compatible with County standards.

Employee's Signature

Supervisor's Signature

Date

Date