

# Telecommuting

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## 1.0 POLICY

Upon approval of the Department Director, the Human Resources Director and the Town Manager, eligible Town employees in certain classifications may be permitted or required to perform approved Town work functions from locations other than official and traditional government office locations.

## 2.0 PURPOSE

The Town of Carolina Beach's telecommuting program is designed as a work alternative that the Town may offer to some employees when it would benefit both the employee and the organization. Telecommuting is not a benefit or entitlement, but an alternative work arrangement intended to enhance productivity, creativity, employee satisfaction and/or reduce operations costs. A telecommuting arrangement could include working in an alternate location exclusively or a combination of an alternate location and conventional office. Some positions, by the nature of their expectations and responsibilities, lend themselves to the possibility of telecommuting; others do not. In all cases, the needs of the Town and service to the citizens and internal customers take precedence in decisions about telecommuting. Telecommuting does not change the basic terms and conditions of employment with the Town and employees are subject to all Town policies that apply when working at a Town facility. This policy covers the employee's and the Town's obligations when the employee works at an alternate location, including the employee's home.

## 3.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to employees in any position type whose job functions could be performed as effectively in an alternate work location as in a conventional work location as determined by the Department Director in consultation with the Town Manager and the Human Resource Director.

## 4.0 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 Telecommuting - The practice of an employee working at a location other than the conventional office such as the employee's home.
- 4.2 Telecommuter - Employee who works in or from a nontraditional location and conducts Town business functions one or more days per week.

## 5.0 ORGANIZATIONAL RULES

- 5.1 Employee Eligibility - Employee eligibility for telecommuting will be determined based on all of the following:
  - A. The nature of position is one where the expectations can be clearly defined and work performance can be effectively evaluated regardless of where it is performed.
  - B. The nature of the position is analyzed by the department and is recommended as suitable by the Human Resources Director for approval by the Town Manager as a telecommuting arrangement.
  - C. The alternate work site is conducive to telecommuting as determined by the requesting department and the Human Resources Department.

- D. The employee's past performance and work habits demonstrate that he can work successfully at an alternate work site.
- E. The telecommuting arrangement does not disrupt service to the public or internal customers.
- F. The position can function independently and the supervisor can adequately assess the work performance in a telecommuting arrangement.
- G. Non-exempt positions will not create additional overtime liability with the telecommuting arrangement.

- 5.2 Implementation:

- A. General Requirements

1. Offering the opportunity to work at home is a management option; telecommuting is not a universal employee benefit. The employee, supervisor, departmental director or the town manager may terminate telecommuting at any time and for any reason.
2. The telecommuter's conditions of employment with the Town remain the same as for non-telecommuting employees and employees are subject to the same policies that apply when working at a Town facility.
3. Employee salary, benefits and employer-sponsored insurance coverage will not change as a result of telecommuting.
4. Telecommuting is not a substitute for dependent care. When necessary, telecommuters must make arrangements for dependent care during the agreed upon work hours and may be asked to provide proof of appropriate dependent care arrangements.
5. Any change to the schedule must be reviewed and approved in advance by the Department Director and must be communicated to the Human Resources Department.
6. While telecommuting, the employee and manager shall decide in advance the method of contact whether via telephone, email, or cellular phone during agreed upon hours. Telecommuters must notify their supervisor if they leave their telecommuting location, as they would inform a receptionist when leaving the traditional office during the work day.
7. Telecommuters are prohibited from conducting face-to-face Town business from their personal home.
8. The telecommuting employee has the responsibility for accounting, accurately documenting, and reporting time worked to the supervisor.
9. All telecommuters and their supervisors will participate periodically in studies to determine the effectiveness of the process.
10. An employee required to attend staff or other meetings must attend even though it may require an employee to report to a Town or offsite facility.
11. More specific conditions relating to the employee's telecommuting arrangements are detailed in the **Telecommuting Agreement** which must be completed by the employee and his supervisor and approved by the Department Director and the Town Manager.

- B. Home Office Requirements

1. Since the employee's home work-space is an extension of the municipal government work-space, Town liability for job-related accidents under Worker's Compensation will continue to exist during the approved work schedule and in the employee's designated work location. To ensure that safe working conditions exist, the employee assumes responsibility for maintaining a safe workplace and safe work behavior during work hours. The employee must certify that his home work space will meet or exceed Town standards for

telecommuting offices. The Town reserves the right to inspect the home work space during work hours to ensure required conditions are met. The inspection will be conducted by a member of the Human Resources Department who should be accompanied by the employee's supervisor or manager.

2. Restricted-access materials shall not be taken out of the office or accessed through the computer unless approved in advance by the telecommuter's manager. Telecommuters shall have and use locked storage space in the alternate work location to ensure the security of any Town related materials approved to be taken out of the office. Some materials, as determined by the Town Attorney, are prohibited from being removed from governmental offices; telecommuters who need to access these materials will be required to come to the Town departmental location to access them.

3. Any changes to the telecommuter's work-space must be reviewed and approved in writing by the employee's manager prior to any changes.

4. Office supplies for use in telecommuting work-space will be provided by the Town through normal channels and should be obtained during the telecommuter's in-office work period. Out-of-pocket expenses for work related supplies may be reimbursable through normal channels. Normally, the Town will not provide office furniture for work at home, but will establish minimum furniture standards.

5. Basic level equipment such as a computer, printer, and software may be provided to the employee. Provision of Internet access and basic level equipment will generally be provided by the employee and will be determined in writing as a part of the Telecommuting Agreement.

6. Town equipment (if any) that is placed in the employee's home office is to be used for Town business only. All equipment distributed for telecommuting remains the property of the Town. The employee is required to return all Town owned telecommuting equipment and related material when the telecommuting arrangement is discontinued.

#### C. Information Services Requirements

1. To ensure hardware and software security, all software used for telecommuting must be approved through the Town's IT vendor before installation. Networking can only be established using compatible hardware and software. Only approved communication sources may be accessed using Town equipment.

2. Software licensed to the Town shall not be duplicated or used on any equipment not approved by the Town.

3. Troubleshooting equipment/software problems are the responsibility of the telecommuter.

4. Equipment, software, or files that are stolen must be reported as soon as practical but no later than the next business day.

5. Unless otherwise agreed to in writing prior to any loss, damage or wear, Town of Carolina Beach does not assume liability for loss, damage or wear of employee-owned equipment.

- 5.3 It is not possible to identify all of the situations that may arise from a specific telecommuting relationship. As such, issues will be addressed on a case by case basis and may not be binding to other arrangements.

## 6.0 PROCEDURES

6.1 The Department Director will assess the nature of the job role and determine the compatibility of the job role and the employee's past performance to determine suitability for telecommuting in accordance with the requirements of this policy.

- 6.2 If, after completing an assessment, the Department Director is prepared to recommend a telecommuting arrangement, he will complete a Telecommuting Agreement form.
- 6.3 The Department Director will submit the recommended Telecommuting Agreement to the Human Resources Director and Town Manager for approval.

## **7.0 APPENDIX, APPENDICES**

### Telecommuting Agreement