



County of Sussex

Telework Guidance

August 05, 2020

Remote Working:

Remote work is a working style that allows professionals to work outside of a traditional office environment. Remote working differs from teleworking in that it occurs on a non-routine or infrequent basis.

Before informing an employee with a known disability that a requested remote work location cannot be accommodated, the supervisor or manager must consult with Human Resources to ensure the denial follows the provisions of the American with Disabilities Act.

Teleworking:

Upon approval of the Division / Department Head, eligible County employees in certain classifications may be permitted or required to perform approved County work functions from locations other than official and traditional government office locations on a regular or recurring basis.

The Sussex County's teleworking program is designed as a work alternative that the County may offer to some employees when it would benefit both the employee and the organization. Teleworking is not a right or entitlement, but an alternative work arrangement intended to enhance safety, productivity, creativity, employee satisfaction, and/or reduce operation costs. A teleworking 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 teleworking; others do not. In all cases, the needs of the County and service to the external and internal customers take precedence in decisions about teleworking. Teleworking does not change the basic terms and conditions of employment with the County, and employees are subject to all County policies that apply when working at a County facility.

This policy covers the employee's and the County's obligations when the employee works at an alternate location, including the employee's home.

Employees participating in the Teleworking Program must complete a formal teleworking agreement that is approved by the Supervisor, Division / Department Head. Human Resources will maintain a copy of the approved teleworking agreement. Departments may use the telework agreement found in this policy. See Appendix.

The employee or the County may terminate the agreement at any time for any reason with a two-week notice. Department Heads have the authority to approve individual teleworking arrangements consistent with the County guidelines.

Position Criteria: Teleworking is not appropriate for every position, and Department Heads should consider the following criteria when approving a teleworking arrangement:

- Exempt positions according to union contract guidelines are eligible. Non-exempt positions require approval of the Human Resources due to potential overtime liability;
- Position should function independently;
- Position should require limited face-to-face customer contact in the office setting;
- Work is technology/information driven rather than customer oriented;
- Position has a well-developed work plan with clear objectives and appropriate measurement criteria to insure good accountability;
- Information security is addressed, and any specialized reference materials are available without additional costs to the County; and the needs of customers and co-workers can be met from alternative locations.

Employee Criteria: Teleworking is not suitable for every employee, and Division/Department Heads should consider the following criteria when approving a teleworking arrangement:

- Employee has thorough knowledge of the job and supervisor's expectations;
- Employee is a good performer as demonstrated by appropriate performance reviews and no disciplinary actions within the past two years;
- Employee has a positive attitude and work ethic;
- Employee has good computer skills and can operate computers, software systems, and related equipment effectively and independently;
- Employee can work productively with limited supervision;
- Employee is well-organized and has effective time management skills;
- Employee is self-motivated and results-oriented; and the employee requires limited supervision.

Management Criteria: Teleworking can present some management challenges as managing remote employees requires skills in communications and accountability. The employee and the manager must be committed to making the teleworking arrangement successful. The following management criteria should be considered when approving a teleworking arrangement.

- Manager encourages good communication and feedback among all employees;
- Manager is comfortable managing by results rather than observation;
- Manager and employee have a developed results-oriented work plan that allows independent performance and accountability;
- Manager is an effective problem-solver and facilitator;
- Manager is supportive of teleworking as a concept
- There is a high level of trust and good working relationship between the manager and the employee.

Participation: Employees who participate in teleworking are required to maintain the same standards of confidentiality for County records and information as if they were working in County office space. The responsibility for maintaining confidentiality applies to all types of records including paper, electronic or other media. Failure to maintain confidentiality will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

There are several types of teleworking arrangements available depending on the frequency of the days scheduled to work at home. The employee and the manager will determine the appropriate level for the position based upon business need and recommend that level to the Department Head for approval. Departments should consider regularly scheduled meetings and other business needs when approving teleworking schedules.

Categories of Teleworking:

A. Occasional Teleworking – One day or less per week

Occasional teleworkers spend most of the week in a County provided work space but may work one day or less in an alternate location. Occasional teleworkers may periodically work full-time at an alternate location to complete a special assignment.

B. Part-time Teleworking – Two to four days per week

Part-time teleworkers work two to four days per week in an alternate location.

C. Full-time Teleworking – Four or more days per week

Full-time teleworkers work four or more days per week in an alternate location, such as a

home office, mobile office, etc. This schedule may include field-based employees who complete administrative assignments at home. Specific hours and days of the week must be defined and approved through a formal teleworking agreement.

Teleworking Provisions: Teleworkers may forfeit their assigned office space and may share space with another employee. Department Heads or their designees will determine how shared spaces will be utilized. If the teleworking agreement is modified or cancelled, the Department Head is responsible for identifying office space. It is strongly recommended that an employee begin teleworking on an occasional or part-time basis prior to a full-time teleworking schedule.

All employees who telework must adhere to all County policies and procedures including those pertaining to technology. Any computer hardware or software purchased by Sussex County is the property of Sussex County. All County-owned computer equipment and software will be returned to the department if the telework arrangement is terminated or if the employee separates employment.

Since the home office is an extension of County work space during the hours and days established in the teleworking agreement, any on-the-job accidents or injuries will be covered under the County's Workers' Compensation Program, provided that such accidents or injuries arise out of the employment and are within the course and scope of employment and occur during the specified teleworking schedule. Teleworkers must report any accidents or injuries immediately to their supervisor as if they were working in their normal office environment. Worker's Compensation claims are subject to review and investigation by Risk Management and the Workers' Compensation Third-Party Administrator. Business visits, meetings with customers or regularly scheduled meetings with co-workers will not be held at the home. Normal business expenses that are usually reimbursed by the County will be handled similarly for teleworkers. Teleworkers are expected to obtain office supplies when they are on-site at their regular County office. Work-related long-distance calls charged to the teleworker's home telephone will be reimbursed following normal reimbursement procedures. Local internet service provider charges will be the responsibility of the Teleworker. Other business expenses must be submitted and approved using the normal reimbursement process established by the teleworker's department and the County Finance Department.

Teleworking is not a substitute for dependent care. Teleworkers will not act as the primary caregiver for dependents during scheduled work hours. Employees working at home will manage dependent care and other personal responsibilities in a manner that allows them to successfully meet job responsibilities.

A teleworking employee may sometimes, but not always, be affected by an emergency requiring the regular County office to close. For example, when the County Administrator releases County employees early or opens late, the teleworking employee would be expected to follow their normal work schedule if working at home. Widespread community emergencies, such as a hurricane or tornado, may affect both the teleworking employee as well as employees working at a County office location. If an emergency such as loss of power affects the teleworker's home office for a major portion of the day, the employee may be required to report to a County office or take vacation leave.

APPENDIX : Telework Request and Agreement

TELEWORK REQUEST AND AGREEMENT

Employee Name: _____

Position: _____

Remote Worksite

Address: _____

Remote Worksite

Description: _____

Voluntary Participation - The employee voluntarily agrees to work at the approved remote workplace indicated above and to follow all applicable policies and procedures. The Employee recognizes that the Telework arrangement is a privilege, not a right.

Salary and Benefits - The Employee understands that a Telework arrangement is not a basis for changing the employee's salary or benefits.

Official Duties - The Employee agrees not to conduct personal business while in an official duty status at the remote work site (e.g., caring for dependents or making home repairs, etc.).

Leave - The Employee agrees to follow established County/Agency/Department procedures for requesting and obtaining approval for leave.

Overtime- The employee agrees to work overtime only when approved in writing and in advance by the supervisor and understands that claimed overtime work without such approval may result in termination of the telework privilege.

Remote Work Site Costs- The Employee understands that the County will not be responsible for any operating costs that are associated with the use of a remote worksite, for example, home maintenance, insurance or utilities (e.g. cell phone and internet charges). The Employee also understands that any entitlement to reimbursement for authorized expenses incurred while conducting business for the County, as provided for by statute or regulation, is not relinquished by this agreement.

Equipment/Supplies- The employee agrees to protect any County-owned equipment and to use the equipment only for official purposes.

➤ **Current Daily Work Schedule:**

o Arrival Time: _____ Departure Time: _____

➤ **Requested Effective Date(s):** _____

- Routine Schedule _____
- Situational Schedule _____

Telework Day & Weekly Schedule:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

I have read and understand Sussex County Telework Program Procedure. I request to participate in the Telework Program.

Employee Signature and Date

Division Manager Signature and Date

****FOR MANAGEMENT USE ONLY****

- _____ Approved Without Modification
- _____ Approved with Modification listed
- _____ Denied

Comments:

Appointing Authority Signature (or designee)

cc: Employee
Department
HR