

Telecommuting Policy

These guidelines are intended to structure telecommuting as a work privilege on a County-wide basis if the department lends itself to teleworking. The goal of telecommuting is to promote the County's strategic objectives including:

- Improve overall productivity
- Make optimal use of county office facilities and equipment
- Reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality through reduced employee trips
- Improve employee retention

Definition:

Telecommuting is an alternative work arrangement available to qualifying County employees. Management will establish a work arrangement with their qualifying employees. The arrangement is not permanent and may be terminated for any reason.

Telecommuting is working from a remote workplace, such as one's home or satellite office, rather than commuting to a designated worksite. Emphasis is placed on information or communication exchange through telephone, computers, modems and/or fax.

Program Participation

Department Managers will:

- Help identify jobs, positions amenable to telecommuting
- Select supervisors within the organizational unit that meet the established criteria for telecommuting (see below)
- Ensure telecommuting guidelines are followed on a consistent basis
- Maintain control over County-owned property used by telecommuters through written receipts for property as part of the Telecommuter's Agreement Form.

Supervisors will:

- Review requests from employees and meet with them to discuss requests to work from home.
- Review paperwork (forms/agreements) and make sure it is complete before turning into upper management.
- Secure approval from upper management before offering an employee telecommuting privileges,
- Forward all signed paperwork to appropriate authorities
- Be responsible for day-to-day performance of telecommuting employees, as with other workers under their supervision.

Employees will:

- Ensure their own equipment is equal to or better than they work on in the office.
- Be familiar with and comply with the Telecommuting Option Policy

- Complete all Telecommuting forms and training before beginning to telecommute
- Be responsible for abiding by the terms of the Telecommuting Policies and Agreement set forth in this document
- Be responsible for maintaining any equipment owned by the employee or the County.
- Comply with all County required security policies and procedures
- Protect all government records and data against unauthorized disclosure, access, mutilation, obliteration or destruction, etc.
- Ensure County owned equipment is used only for officially authorized purposes.

Information Services Department Will:

- Be responsible for coordinating Telecommuter equipment needs.
- Coordinate Telecommuter technical needs with Information Services Department.
- Coordinate repairs on County-owned equipment at the designated headquarters.
- Establish standard hardware and software configurations for providing connections to County wide area and local area networks in a Telecommuting environment.
- Provide technical support to Telecommuter
- Address any Telecommuter related information security considerations.

Employee Eligibility Criteria

An employee's participation in a Telecommuting program is voluntary. Only full-time employees are eligible. Employees interested in telecommuting must meet the following criteria:

- Have the ability to work at a higher performance level with minimal supervision
- Have a thorough knowledge and full understanding of the work tasks
- Have a history of reliable and responsible accomplishment of work duties and performance
- Have demonstrated ability to establish priorities and manage time
- Have Performance Evaluations with overall ratings of "Meets Job Standards" for the past two years. In the case where the number of participants must be limited, the appointing authority shall determine and select participants at his/her sole discretion.
- Have duties/functions that lend themselves to the Telecommuting Program
- May have their own computer equipment which meets or exceeds the same standards as the equipment used at their office location.

Standards & Ethics

1. Employees shall comply with all County policies and guidelines for standards and ethics. Employees are prohibited from using County owned hardware, software, telecommunication or any other equipment for personal purposes.
2. Employees will need to protect records from unauthorized disclosure or damage. Employees may be held responsible and may be subject to disciplinary action for the loss, disappearance or theft of official documents (hard and/or electronic copy).
3. The amount of time an employee is expected to work will not change due to Telecommuting. A full time employee is expected to work a 40- hour workweek.

Program Components

Training

Individuals participating in the Telecommuting program and their supervisors must participate in the Telecommuting Training Program. For renewed Telecommuting Agreements, the Manager/Supervisor will meet individually with the Telecommuter to discuss objectives and prepare the Telecommuting Agreement.

Commuter Services will provide assistance when requested. However, Department Heads are responsible for referring Telecommuters and supervisors for training during the implementation phase. A training schedule will be available to Department Heads and Managers.

Equipment

County equipment and software may be provided to enable an employee to telecommute at the discretion of the appointing authority or designee, subject to compliance with Telecommuting Standards.

Employees may utilize their own equipment and software subject to the needs of their department and in compliance with the terms of Telecommuting Standards. Such usage should promote efficiency and effectiveness and County data resident on or within magnetic and/or other storage media should be protected.

Resident Workspace

Home-based telecommuters shall provide a diagram or other description of their proposed workspace to assure compliance with the Telecommuting Standards.

Criteria For Telecommuting Eligibility

Work Habits

Work at high performance level with minimal supervision
Conscientious about work schedule
Self-motivated
Well-organized
Strong time management skills
Consistent and dependable level of productivity
High skill level and knowledge of job
Computer literate (if relevant)

Communication Skills

Works well with others
Strong oral and written communication skills
Communicates well with Management
Has supervisor's support of Telecommunication Arrangement

Telecommuting Standards

The San Bernardino County Government Telecommuting Program is designed to make working at home an effective alternative. When telecommuting is implemented, the following conditions apply:

1. Telecommuting is entirely voluntary and may be terminated by the employee or the County at any time.
2. Duties, obligations, responsibilities and conditions of employment with the County shall remain consistent with the employee's classification. Telecommuting shall not affect the employee's salary and benefits status.
3. Use of equipment, hardware, software, data, supplies and furniture, when provided by the County for use at the remote worksite is limited to authorized persons for purposes relating to County business.
4. An employee participating in a Telecommuting program must attend training
5. Employees shall designate a specific workspace in their residence for telecommuting. A diagram or picture of this room shall be presented to the Supervisor and/or Department Head. The workspace shall be maintained at all times in a safe condition, free from hazards and other dangers to the employee, equipment, County documents, records and information.
6. Employees shall utilize equipment and/or software compatible with that used in the employee's department, except in unusual circumstances. County Policy 07-087 and Standard Practice 07-08SP1 shall apply to the use of computers for telecommuting. The County Office of Management Services may support only software and equipment purchased through the County, in compliance with County Policy and Standard Practice guidelines. The County will not provide unique or auxiliary microcomputer products if only for the sole desire of a telecommuter to use these products and not as a result of standard office use.
7. The employee is fully responsible for ensuring proper use of any County supplied equipment. The County will provide for repairs to and/or support of County equipment and software at a County office, vendor location or only by telephone. In-home support will not be provided.
8. If employee uses personal equipment, the County accepts no responsibility for its maintenance and repair or any associated costs. Employee-owned equipment shall protect County data resident on or within magnetic or other storage media.
9. The employee will follow appropriate data backup and protection measures in compliance with County guidelines and requirements when using computer equipment during telecommuting.
10. County-owned software shall not be duplicated.
11. The telecommuting employee shall be reachable by telephone, within reason, during agreed upon work hours. Telecommuters must notify their office if they are leaving their telecommuting location much as they would inform the receptionist when leaving their traditional office during a work- day.

12. An employee shall submit an expense report form for reimbursement of long distance business calls while telecommuting. If the department opts, the employee may use a County issued long distance calling card. If it is cost effective, a separate phone line may be installed, at the department's expense, in the telecommuter's home office.
13. The telecommuter must maintain a proper work environment. Childcare or eldercare arrangements must be made as if the telecommuter was at a designated worksite so as not to interfere with the employee's responsibility to maintain a proper work environment.
14. In order to use electrical equipment, including computers, in the employee's home, the home must be equipped with grounded, 3-prong electrical outlets. Surge protectors are recommended.
15. The employee (telecommuter) remains liable for injuries to any third parties and or family members that occur on the telecommuting employee's premises.
16. Requests to use vacation, sick time or other leave while telecommuting, must be approved by the employee's supervisor in the same manner as when at the designated worksite.
17. If a telecommuting employee is sick during a scheduled telecommuting day, sick leave, or other leave approved by the employee's supervisor, shall be used for the scheduled hours not worked.
18. Individual tax implications, related to the residence workspace, are the sole responsibility of the employee (telecommuter). Employees are encouraged to consult with a qualified tax advisor.
19. Telecommuting employees and their supervisors shall participate in studies, when necessary, to evaluate the County's telecommuting program. Any answers to questions and identities will be held in strict confidence.
20. An employee who telecommutes is obligated to comply with all County rules, policies, practices, and instructions. Violation of these rules, policies, practices and instructions may result in deterrence from telecommuting and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
21. Upon reasonable notice, the County may make on-site visits to the telecommuting address to determine the worksite is safe and hazard free, to maintain, repair, inspect or retrieve County owned equipment, software, data and supplies.

The Telecommuting Candidate and Department Supervisor have jointly reviewed this.

Employee Name: _____
 Printed Name: _____
 Title & Department _____

Date: _____

Supervisor Name: _____
 Department: _____

Date: _____