

Suggested policy format and content. RTPA specific policies should be developed in consultation with RTPA Legal Counsel, Board of Directors and appropriate regulatory agencies.

14. Teleworking Outside of the Office

RTPA supports teleworking as a work option benefiting both employees and the region. A teleworking program can maximize employee productivity, improve employee morale and motivation, and reduce traffic congestion during peak travel periods.

Teleworking is an opportunity for eligible employees to establish an alternate work arrangement that allows them to work at home or at another location as part of their approved, regular work schedule.

Teleworking cannot interfere with the accomplishment of RTPA business, nor can teleworking cause a reduction in the levels of service expected to be provided by the employee or their team. Teleworking is a management option; it is not a benefit to which employees have any vested right.

A telework arrangement may be informal, such as working from home for a short-term project or during business travel, or formal, as described below. Other informal, short-term arrangements may be made for employees on family or medical leave, to the extent practical for the employee and the organization and with the consent of the employee's health care provider, if appropriate. All informal telecommuting arrangements will be made on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the business needs of the organization.

Eligibility

Individuals requesting a formal telework arrangement must hold a Permanent Full Time position, have been employed at RTPA for a minimum of 12 months, and have achieved, as a minimum, a good overall performance rating on their most recent Performance Evaluation. Exceptions to the 12-month employment minimum may be considered by the Executive Director. Teleworking may not be appropriate for some employees and some jobs.

Responsibilities and Expectations

In establishing a telework arrangement, both management and employees recognize that teleworking cannot prevent or interfere with the accomplishment of RTPA business, nor can an arrangement cause a reduction in the level of service expected to be provided by the employee or their team.

A Teleworking Outside of the Office (Telework) Agreement and the Home Office Safety Checklist are required to be approved, in advance, before an employee begins to work from home or at another location on a regular basis. A Telework Agreement is not required when an employee wants to work from home or at another location on an occasional basis; such arrangements should be coordinated between an employee and his/her supervisor.

The schedule for work performed at the telework site is subject to negotiation with, and approval by, the employee's supervisor. The teleworker shall work the RTPA "core business hours" which are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding the lunch period.

The teleworker must make him or herself accessible during the core business hours for meetings via telephone or other technology and also must have access to the RTPA email and calendar system via the Internet.

Meetings and work assignments may require employees to be physically present in the office on certain days that may have been scheduled for telework. On these occasions, it is the employee's responsibility to make every effort possible to come into the office and ensure agency business is not disrupted.

The teleworker is expected to establish and maintain, at his/her expense, an appropriate work environment within their home or other remote location for work purposes. The designated work area must be maintained in a safe condition, free from hazards and other dangers to employees and equipment.

The teleworker is expected to establish and maintain, at his/her expense, equipment and services such as a computer, telephone, Internet access, and other related equipment and resources needed to support the telework arrangement.

On any personal computer(s) used to perform work for RTPA, the teleworker must, at a minimum, enable and keep up-to-date a commercially available firewall, install and keep up-to-date a commercially available anti-virus product, and maintain current security (patch) levels for the computer's operating system and any application software. Remote access to RTPA electronic resources is accomplished through the RTPA virtual private network (VPN). RTPA VPN users may be required to allow security scans of their computers to confirm the presence of up-to-date firewall, anti-virus, and security patches. Questions regarding the suitability of software to meet RTPA security requirements can be posed to the information technology support staff.

Storing (saving) RTPA electronic documents and files on non-RTPA computers is discouraged. Documents and files accessed in the course of teleworking should be saved on a RTPA network drive (e.g. the M drive). Should connectivity issues or other circumstances necessitate temporarily saving a RTPA document or file on the teleworker's computer, the teleworker must save the document or file on a RTPA network drive at the earliest opportunity and delete all copies of the document or file from the teleworker's computer.

Work performed on personal devices while teleworking may subject those devices to review by RTPA authorized staff in order to comply with public records requests, litigation holds, or in situations in which RTPA is legally required to store or provide access to its records.

Coverage under the RTPA worker's compensation insurance policy for job-related accidents will continue to exist during the employee's scheduled telework hours. This liability is limited to injuries resulting directly from work and only if the injury occurs in the designated work area. Teleworking employees are responsible for notifying RTPA of such injuries in accordance with RTPA accident and injury reporting procedures. The employee is liable for injuries to third persons and/or members of the employee's family on the employee's premises.

Teleworking is not a substitute for child care. Teleworkers must make alternative arrangements for child care during designated work hours.

Employees must ensure they have access to all appropriate work related information. Teleworking should not reduce the productivity of on-site employees by asking them to find or email information maintained at the office.

Teleworkers are subject to the RTPA Employee Handbook and all supplemental policies.

Casual Teleworking

Employees who telework on an informal or casual basis, or perform RTPA work from a remote location outside of business hours, are subject to the responsibilities and expectations described in this policy as applicable to their situation.

Teleworking Request Procedures and Approval Process

An employee and supervisor may propose teleworking as a possible work arrangement.

Prior to approving a Telework Agreement, the employee and supervisor, with the assistance of the Director of Finance and Administrative Services, will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement. Attention will be paid to:

- **Employee Suitability:**
The employee and supervisor will assess the needs and work habits of the employee compared to traits customarily recognized as appropriate for successful teleworkers. Employees must be able to complete tasks efficiently and effectively while teleworking. The employee must at a minimum, have a good overall performance rating on their most recent Performance Evaluation.
- **Job Responsibilities:**
The employee and supervisor will discuss the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a teleworking arrangement. Certain jobs may not lend themselves to teleworking, such as jobs requiring teamwork, access by the public, supervision, or use of information and materials that cannot be taken from the office.
- **Equipment Needs and Work Space Considerations:**
Telework applicants must complete the Home Office Safety Checklist to confirm that the appropriate equipment and resources are available, and that the condition of the proposed work site environment is considered safe.

Employees requesting consideration for a telework arrangement should complete the 'Teleworking Outside of the Office' agreement/approval form and submit this to their supervisor and Department Director. Telework Agreements will be approved for a maximum of one year and will be reviewed by the Executive Director prior to becoming effective. An existing Agreement may be extended with approval from the supervisor and Department Director via an Agreement Extension Request; each extension will be for a maximum of one year.

Upon approval of the Telework Agreement, a three month trial period will commence. At the conclusion of the trial period, the employee and supervisor will review the arrangement and make a recommendation for continuance, modifications, or discontinuation to the Department Director.

An approved Telework Agreement will be subject to review if the employee is transferred or promoted to another position, if there is a significant change in the employee's job responsibilities, the employee's direct supervisor changes, or if there are performance issues. An approved Telework Agreement may be revoked at the discretion of the Department Director and/or if the criteria used for approval, as noted in this policy, are no longer met.

In the event that a teleworking arrangement is to be discontinued, RTPA may provide the employee with thirty (30) days' notice of such a change to accommodate commuting, child care, and other problems that may arise from such a change. There may be instances, however, where no notice is possible or granted.

All approved requests will be forwarded to the Director of Finance and Administrative Services for program coordination and recordkeeping. The Director of Finance and Administrative Services has the general responsibility for overseeing the day-to-day implementation of this policy in accordance with payroll and legal requirements. Should an exception to the policy be desired, the request for exception is to be put in writing to the Executive Director for review and approval. Such exceptions may be granted only by the Executive Director, in consultation with the employee's supervisor.