

Monday, March 16, 2020

Temporary Telecommuting Policy During the COVID-19 Emergency

NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H or System), in its' effort to mitigate the transmission and effects of COVID-19, is implementing a temporary System-wide Telecommuting policy which encourages social distancing strategies in the workplace. This temporary policy will allow certain employees to work from alternate work locations, while ensuring the continuity of H+H's business operations. This policy does not supersede H+H operating procedures, regulations, policies or other workplace rules, but rather is designed to facilitate the performance of System business from alternate work locations.

I. POLICY & PROCEDURE:

A. Plan Creation and Implementation

1. Each facility Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and each Corporate Officer must immediately create and implement a Telecommuting plan which sets forth employees eligible to participate, by title, in the Temporary Telecommuting Program taking into consideration the eligibility criteria (defined below), as well as the facility's or business unit's capacity to support Telecommuting. Telecommuting support includes its' technological and telecommunications capabilities, as well as availability of supervisory staff. The CEO or Corporate Officer shall coordinate with departmental heads, Human Resources and EITS in the creation and implementation of their Telecommuting plans. Once final, the CEO or Corporate Officer shall submit their temporary Telecommuting Plan to the Office of the Vice President for Human Resources.

B. Eligibility for Telecommuting

1. The CEO or Corporate Officers, in conjunction with departmental heads must create a roster of employees eligible, including title, to participate in the Temporary Telecommuting Program. Both represented and non-represented staff are eligible to participate. Participation in this Temporary Telecommuting Program by employees is on a completely voluntary basis, but should be encouraged to meet the program's goals.
2. Staff who perform services in a business continuity context, which have measurable deliverables, and do not require in-person supervision, should be considered for Telecommuting opportunities. Tasks that may be appropriate for Telecommuting include research, writing, data entry/processing or analysis, Helpdesk functions and other tasks that may be completed and appropriately supervised from a remote location.
3. The Telecommuter must be able effectively to communicate with clients, stakeholders and team members from home or other alternative work site in order to be eligible. Where the Telecommuter's responsibilities require case

management through a workflow system, remote access to that system must be available for Telecommuting to be appropriate.

4. In order to participate in the Temporary Telecommuting Program, Telecommuters who do not have a System issued phone must provide a personal contact number where they can be reached during scheduled work hours. Additionally, eligibility for the program requires the Telecommuter to be available during scheduled work hours.
5. Telecommuting is generally not appropriate for a healthcare worker or positions that require frequent interactions with members of the public.
6. H+H may consider work/performance history in making Telecommuting eligibility determinations.
7. If an employee is subject to self-isolation or quarantine, and their position is one in which Telecommuting is feasible, the employee may be asked to work from home on a voluntary basis if the employee is healthy enough to work and all other criteria in this policy are met.
8. Employees need not sign an agreement to participate in the Telecommuting program as this policy does not supersede System rules, regulations and policies.

C. Work Schedules

1. Regular work hours and schedule should remain unchanged whenever possible. Any deviation sought by an employee to a pre-existing schedule must be requested by the employee in writing to their supervisor and approved by the department head. The System may deviate from the employee's regular schedule to meet operational needs.
2. A facility that has instituted staggered work schedules for its' employees in the workplace may adjust the telework schedule to conform to the staggered schedules for employees in the workplace.
3. Schedules may be developed on a full-time or part-time basis. Telework days may be for the entire duration of an employee's schedule or a hybrid schedule of telework and in-office work (e.g., telework three days a week and on-site at the workplace two days a week).
4. At the facility CEO or Corporate Officer's discretion, alternating "teams" of employees may provide telework and in-person coverage.
5. The CEO or Corporate Officer, in conjunction with departmental heads, shall develop a written protocol for supervisory oversight that ensures that Telecommuters are working their designated hours and completing deliverables as required.

D. Location, Equipment and Supplies

1. The designated alternate work location must be an appropriate work environment that maintains the privacy and integrity of the work performed. This location should be one in which the employee's Telecommuting duties can be performed in a safe and ergonomically appropriate manner. The Telecommuter must agree to perform all work at the primary alternate location. If business or exigent circumstances arise requiring the employee to work at a remote location other than the primary designated alternate location, the employee shall immediately notify their supervisor to determine whether the secondary alternate location is appropriate for continued Telecommuting.

2. H+H shall provide equipment, such as a computer or phone when possible. Personal equipment or services (e.g. an employee's own computer, router and internet connection) may be used, provided that strict adherence to information security protocols is followed. Any questions about information security protocols should be referred to EITS.
 - a. The Telecommuter must protect any System owned equipment and use the equipment for official purposes only. H+H will maintain any office equipment issued to the Telecommuter.
 - b. If H+H provides information technology (IT) equipment, the Telecommuter must safeguard that equipment and not use or allow such equipment to be used for purposes other than the official H+H duties.
 - c. Telecommuters must follow all information security protocols when using H+H electronic equipment and/or accessing H+H systems in accordance with Operating Procedure 20-60, [Limited Personal Use Of HHC Office And Technology Resources](#), which may be accessed by following this link.
 - d. Telecommuters must maintain any approved safeguards to protect H+H records from unauthorized disclosure or damage and comply with the privacy requirements set forth by H+H.

II. **TIMEKEEPING:**

- A. The Telecommuter agrees to follow established office procedures for requesting and obtaining approval of leave while telecommuting.
- B. All requests for overtime must be approved in advance by the Telecommuter's supervisor or departmental head or as is customary in the Telecommuter's regular worksite.
- C. The Telecommuter's supervisor, or their designee, shall complete the Telecommuter's time sheet if the Telecommuter is unavailable to complete their own time sheet. The supervisor shall complete the Telecommuter's timesheet indicating the Telecommuter's scheduled hours were fulfilled unless (1) leave was requested and approved as stated herein, (2) overtime was requested and approved as stated herein, or (3) the Telecommuter has notified their supervisor they failed to complete their required scheduled hours or were otherwise unavailable for work during their scheduled hours.
- D. The Telecommuter is continually bound by all other regular H+H timekeeping rules and procedures.
- E. Employees will use Timekeeping Code 52.

III. **COMPLIANCE WITH H+H OPERATING PROCEDURES, RULES AND REGULATIONS:**

All terms and conditions of the Telecommuter's H+H employment will continue to apply.

- A. The Telecommuter is continually bound by H+H's operating procedures, standards of conduct, rules and regulations while telecommuting.
- B. Workplace rules prohibiting private activities during work hours must be followed notwithstanding the fact that employees are working from an alternate location.

IV. **WORK LOCATION COSTS:**

- A. H+H is not responsible for covering any operating costs that may be associated with the telecommuter's use of their remote location for telecommuting.

V. **LIABILITY:**

A. H+H will not be liable for damage to the Telecommuter's home, alternate work location, personal property, or others while the employee is telecommuting.

VI. **TERMINATION AND CHANGES TO THE TEMPORARY TELECOMMUTING PROGRAM:**

A. H+H may terminate or change the terms of this Temporary Telecommuting Program.

B. Each facility's CEO or Corporate Officer may change the terms or an employee's participation or terminate such participation at any time.



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