



CITY OF VISALIA PERSONNEL POLICY

Telecommuting Policy

I. PURPOSE

To establish procedures for allowing City employees to work remotely (telecommute), as determined by the City, under specified circumstances including, but not limited to a public health emergency. Working remotely is a temporary arrangement that allows City employees to fulfill their job responsibilities during regularly scheduled work hours at a site other than their onsite work location.

Telecommuting does not apply to situations where an employee works at home on an incidental or occasional basis (i.e. to complete a staff report that requires greater concentration and fewer interruptions). These alternate work site arrangements can be approved by an employee's department on a case-by-case basis, and do not require a written agreement.

II. POLICY

The intent of this policy is to provide procedural guidance to employees, supervisors and Department Heads in determining when a telecommuting arrangement is appropriate, and to outline criteria for implementation of such arrangement.

Allowing such an arrangement requires an assessment of employee job duties that may be conducive to telecommuting, employee work performance and work behaviors, and operational needs. Telecommuting shall be considered a privilege, not a right. Telecommuting in no way changes employees' duties, obligations, responsibilities, or terms and conditions of employment with the City. Employees telecommuting must comply with all City policies and procedures. Individual departments may have additional requirements, guidelines, or procedures for telecommuting.

Telecommute arrangements are for regular, ongoing telecommuting and must be supported by a written agreement that specifies the requirements and details of the arrangement. All telecommute arrangements will be regularly evaluated to ensure effectiveness and compliance with the agreement.

III. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Eligibility for working remotely is based on the position, the employee, and the needs of the department. Not every employee, and not every position, is suited for working remotely.

An employee's position may be suitable for working remotely when the job duties:

- Have specific objectives and performance standards that can be measured.
- Do not require frequent interaction at the regular worksite with supervisors, colleagues, or members of the public, in person or by phone.
- Do not require ongoing supervision of staff at the regular worksite.
- Do not require the employee's immediate presence at the regular worksite to address unscheduled events.



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- Do not require sensitive and confidential documents to be transported to the alternate work location.
- Are independent in nature.
- Do not require onsite customer support or access to onsite confidential documents.
- Are such that performing them remotely does not negatively impact the productivity of the work unit/department by impeding work flow or creating additional work for other staff.

Employees may be suitable for working remotely when their personal work characteristics, as determined by their supervisor, consistently include:

- Demonstrated motivation, dependability, productivity, and responsibility.
- Effective communication with all those contacted in the course of work.
- The ability to work independently and complete work with minimal supervision.
- A high level of skill and knowledge of their job.
- The ability to prioritize work effectively and consistently meet deadlines.
- Good organizational and time management skills.
- The ability to perform specific job duties from a location separate from the worksite without negatively impacting the quantity or quality of the work performed, or the time required to complete assignments.
- Having a record of meeting performance standards and does not have attendance issues.
- Following all City policies and guidelines.

The needs of the department may be suitable for employees to telecommute when the department/division will not be adversely affected.

IV. EVALUATION PROCESS

An employee may submit a Telecommuting Request Form. The request will be considered first by the employee's supervisor. The supervisor will make a recommendation to the Department Head, and the Department Head will make a recommendation to the Human Resources Manager, and the Human Resources Manager will make a recommendation to the City Manager or designee, who will be the final decision-maker for the request. In evaluating whether to approve a request telecommuting and determine the appropriate parameters, the following will be considered:

- Evaluation criteria noted in Section III above.
- Determination that the job duties can effectively be performed while telecommuting.
- Business needs of the unit, communication, and impact of remote work on other team members and/or customers.
- Employee readiness for telecommuting, including access to reliable technology, Internet, confidential space to conduct work, limited outside distractions, etc.
- Ability to effectively supervise the work of the employee who is telecommuting.
- Changes needed to ensure the affected team can meet its objectives.
- Ensure the employee and work product will be as effectively managed as their on-site colleagues.



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V. SUPERVISOR EXPECTATIONS

Expectations of supervisors who have employees telecommuting:

- Determine the number of hours reasonable for the employee to productively work remotely. Generally, time spent telecommuting during a workweek will be limited; employees are expected to work onsite on a regular basis.
- Develop a set schedule of days and hours that will be devoted to performing work when telecommuting. To the extent possible, these should coincide with regular worksite hours to ensure availability for collaboration with staff and customers.
- Establish and regularly communicate work expectations to employees who are telecommuting, including setting work priorities, deadlines, and reviewing work assignments.
- Establish specific expectations for regular communication (in person, video conferencing, telephone) with the telecommuting employee.
- Require regular written updates on assignment progress and completion, and evaluate those to ensure work productivity.
- Develop a system to accurately and effectively evaluating the telecommuting employee's performance.
- Establish a review period after which a decision can be made about whether the employee will be able to continue telecommuting.

Once a request to telecommute is approved by all required parties, the Human Resources Division, working with the impacted department, will initiate a Telecommute Agreement outlining specific expectations. The Agreement will be retained in the employee personnel file. This Agreement will be reviewed at least every 90 days to ensure compliance with the expectations and ensure effectiveness of the telecommute arrangement. The City has the right to end or modify the Telecommute Agreement at any time without prior notification.

VI. EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS

Expectations of employees who are telecommuting:

- Perform the full range of their normal job duties and work the assigned work schedule per the Telecommute Agreement, unless they receive their supervisor's prior approval to adjust their schedule.
- Remain productive and responsive during their scheduled work hours.
- Maintain a regular presence with their department/division while working remotely. Presence may be maintained by using appropriate technology including but not limited to video conferencing, email or other department specified method.
- Maintain the same response times as if they were at their regular work location and will make themselves available to attend scheduled work meetings as required and/or requested.
- Have a working telephone or mobile phone at their remote location and, when appropriate, must ensure that incoming calls to their office phone are forwarded to their remote location phone or mobile phone.
- Arrange for child/dependent care as necessary for the hours in which the employee works from home. Telecommuting cannot be used to provide active care for a child or other dependent.



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- Only perform personal tasks and errands during the employee's scheduled breaks and lunches.
- Provide their supervisor with regular, ongoing updates on work assignment progress and completion.
- Maintain the same level of expected productivity as when working onsite.
- Comply with City policies when using paid leave, coordinate with and receive approval from their supervisor, in advance, for any periods of time during the workday they will not be working, and note those as appropriate on the time sheet (e.g. sick leave for a doctor's visit).
- Report to their onsite work location during their scheduled work hours when requested by their supervisor. Travel to and from the onsite work location is considered commute time, and telecommuting employees are not eligible to receive reimbursement for this travel.
- Accurately record their work hours in the timekeeping system. Non-exempt employees may not work overtime without prior authorization.

VII. ALTERNATE WORK LOCATION

- Telecommuting employees must establish an appropriate work environment within their alternate location for work purposes. The City is not responsible for costs associated with setup of alternate office spaces, such as internet costs, rent, utilities, remodeling, furniture or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to alternate office spaces.
- Telecommuting employees are not to hold business visits or in-person meetings at their alternate work location unless approved by their supervisor.
- Telecommuting employees must take all precautions necessary to secure confidential information in their alternate work location and prevent unauthorized access to any City of Visalia information or system.
- Telecommuting employees are solely responsible for the configuration of and all the expenses and services associated with remote workspace. This includes ensuring and maintaining an ergonomically appropriate and safe remote worksite.
- All files, records, or other materials created while telecommuting are considered City property.
- The City is not responsible for damage to an employee's personal equipment or property while the employee is telecommuting. Employees who use their personal equipment for telecommuting are responsible for the installation, repair, and maintenance of the equipment.
- All City rules, policies, and procedures regarding the use of electronic devices apply while an employee is working remotely, regardless of whether the employee is using City-owned or personally owned equipment.

VIII. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Employees who are unable to work at their regular location due to their own or family member's illness or injury are expected to request and use appropriate leave accruals for this purpose.

The California Public Records Act applies to employees working remotely and their work product. This requirement exists regardless of where the public record is located, including on an employee's personal device or network.



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For overtime eligible (non-exempt) employees, certain activities, such as travel to and from required meetings, are included as hours worked.

Telecommuting employees are covered by workers' compensation for job-related injuries that occur in the course and scope of employment. Telecommuting employees are responsible for immediately notifying their supervisor of any injuries sustained while at their alternate work location and in conjunction with their regular work duties in accordance with City policy.

Employees may not disclose confidential or private files, records, materials, or other information and must not allow access to City networks or databases to anyone who is not authorized to have access.

A supervisor, Department Head, or the City Manager may deny, end, or modify the Telework Agreement at any time for no reason or for any reason the City determines to be in its best interests.

Approval or denial of a telecommute request or revocation of a Telecommute Agreement is not subject to any grievance procedures, or to any other review or appeal procedures.
