



Telecommuting Policy and Procedure

Purpose

Telecommuting is a flexible work arrangement that enables employees to achieve a more successful balance between work responsibilities and family life. Telecommuting allows employees to work at home, on the road or in a satellite location for all or part of their workweek. Pittsylvania County considers telecommuting to be a viable work option when both the employee and the job are suited to such an arrangement. Telecommuting may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not for others. Telecommuting is not an entitlement, it is not a guaranteed benefit, and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with Pittsylvania County.

Procedures

Telecommuting is a privilege, not a right. All County employees who telecommute must have an approved telecommuting agreement under this policy. Telecommuting can be informal, such as working from home for a short-term project or on the road during business travel, or a formal, set schedule of working away from the office as described below. Either an employee or a supervisor can suggest telecommuting as a possible work arrangement.

Any telecommuting arrangement made will be on a trial basis for the first three months and may be discontinued or modified at will and at any time at the request of either the telecommuter or Pittsylvania County. Every effort will be made to provide reasonable notice of such change to accommodate commuting and other issues that may arise from the termination or modification of a telecommuting arrangement. There may be instances, however, when no notice is possible.

An employee needs to complete a Telecommuting Application and submit to his/her supervisor for consideration.

Eligibility

Individuals requesting formal telecommuting arrangements must be employed with Pittsylvania County for a minimum of 12 months of continuous, regular employment and must have a satisfactory performance record. Only Full-time, Exempt, employees are eligible for telecommuting consideration.

Before entering into any telecommuting agreement, the employee and supervisor, with the assistance of the human resource department, will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement, reviewing the following areas:

- 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 telecommuters.
- Job responsibilities. The employee and supervisor will discuss the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a telecommuting arrangement.
- Equipment needs, workspace design considerations and scheduling issues. The employee and supervisor will review the physical workspace needs and the appropriate location for the telework.
- Tax and other legal implications. The employee must determine any tax or legal implications under IRS, state and local government laws, and/or restrictions of working out of a home-based office. Responsibility for fulfilling all obligations in this area rests solely with the employee.

All telecommuting agreements must be approved by the Human Resources Manager and the County Administrator (or Deputy County Administrator) prior to beginning telecommuting. Once approved, a telecommuting agreement will be prepared and signed by all parties, and a three-month trial period will commence.

Evaluation of telecommuter performance during the trial period will include regular interaction by between the employee and the supervisor, and weekly face-to-face meetings to discuss work progress and problems. At the end of the trial period, the employee and supervisor will meet to evaluate the effectiveness of the arrangement and make recommendations for continuance or modifications. Evaluation of telecommuter performance beyond the trial period will be consistent with that received by employees working at the office in both content and frequency but will focus on work output and completion of objectives rather than on time-based performance.

Employees who telecommute must be available to work at their regular worksite on telecommuting days if needed and as directed by their supervisor.

An appropriate level of communication between the telecommuter and supervisor will be agreed to as part of the discussion process and will be more formal during the trial period. After conclusion of the trial period, the supervisor and telecommuter will communicate at a level consistent with employees working at the office or in a manner and frequency that is appropriate for the job and the individuals involved.

Equipment

On a case-by-case basis, Pittsylvania County will determine, with information supplied by the employee and the supervisor, the appropriate equipment needs (including hardware, software, modems, phone and data lines and other office equipment) for each telecommuting arrangement. The human resource and information technology departments will serve as resources in this matter. Equipment supplied by the organization will be maintained by the organization. Equipment supplied by the employee, if deemed appropriate by the organization, will be maintained by the employee. Pittsylvania County accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned

equipment. Pittsylvania County reserves the right to make determinations as to appropriate equipment, subject to change at any time. Equipment supplied by the organization is to be used for business purposes only. The telecommuter must sign an inventory of all Pittsylvania County property received and agree to take appropriate action to protect the items from damage or theft. Upon termination of employment, all company property will be returned to the company, unless other arrangements have been made.

Pittsylvania County will supply the employee with appropriate office supplies (pens, paper, etc.) as deemed necessary. All expenditures must be approved in advance by the supervisor.

The employee will establish an appropriate work environment within his or her home for work purposes. Pittsylvania County will not be responsible for costs associated with the setup of the employee's home office, such as remodeling, furniture or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to the home office space.

Security

Consistent with the organization's expectations of information security for employees working at the office, telecommuting employees will be expected to ensure the protection of proprietary company and customer information accessible from their home office. Steps include the use of locked file cabinets and desks, regular password maintenance, and any other measures appropriate for the job and the environment.

Safety

Employees are expected to maintain their home workspace in a safe manner, free from safety hazards. Pittsylvania County will provide each telecommuter with a safety checklist that must be completed at least twice per year. Injuries sustained by the employee in a home office location and in conjunction with his or her regular work duties are normally covered by the company's workers' compensation policy. Telecommuting employees are responsible for notifying the employer of such injuries as soon as practicable. The employee is liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to his or her home worksite.

Telecommuting is not designed to be a replacement for appropriate child care. The focus of the arrangement must remain on job performance and meeting business demands. Prospective telecommuters are encouraged to discuss expectations of telecommuting with family members prior to entering a trial period.

All policies and procedures set forth in the Pittsylvania County Personnel Policies Manual applicable at the regular worksite are applicable while telecommuting. Failure to comply may result in the immediate termination of the telecommuting agreement. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Telecommuting employees must perform designated work during scheduled work hours.

- Employees must obtain approval to use vacation, sick, or other leave in the same manner as employees who do not telecommute.
- Telecommuting employees who become ill must report the hours actually worked, and use sick leave for hours not worked.

Ad Hoc Arrangements

Temporary telecommuting arrangements may be approved for circumstances such as inclement weather, special projects, business travel, in the event of emergency or pandemic. These arrangements are approved on an as-needed basis only, with no expectation of ongoing continuance. Please refer to the Temporary Telecommuting Policy for details. In the event non-exempt employees are temporarily approved under these circumstances, they may be required to accurately record all hours worked using Pittsylvania County's time-keeping system.

All informal telecommuting arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the business needs of the organization.