

## **Telework Policy for COVID-19 Outbreak**

**Effective Date: March 16, 2020**

### **I. Purpose**

This policy is intended to provide a telework option for certain employees able to work from home for Department Heads to help manage their workforce during the COVID-19 outbreak. This policy is not intended to serve as a permanent Citywide Telework Policy.

### **II. General Policy Provisions**

- a. This Telework Policy may allow staff to work at home for periods of time under certain conditions which are described below.
- b. The terms and conditions of employment, including all City of Chicago policies and procedures, and all departmental policies and procedures, continue to apply in any telework arrangement.
- c. The City of Chicago is under no obligation to approve any telework arrangement or to approve any telework agreement. The decision as to whether or not telework will be approved will be made on a case-by-case basis.
- d. Telework is limited to no more than two weeks at a time. Any extensions must be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Department Head for two-week increments.
- e. Telework is limited to the following:
  - i. Employees who have received a quarantine order by CDPH or a medical provider.
  - ii. Employees who have been ordered to remain home by the City due to exposure or potential exposure.
  - iii. Employees who have returned from a country that has been listed on the CDC's Geographic Risk Assessment for COVID-19 as a Level 3 country. The CDC Geographic Risk Assessment for COVID-19 can be found at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers).
  - iv. Employees who have an underlying medical condition that subjects them to increased risk from the COVID-19 outbreak, at the discretion of the Department Head .
- f. Employees who have any illness or injury, including contracting COVID-19, that restricts or renders the employee incapable of performing their job duties are not expected to and should not work from home while ill or injured. Employees should consult with their HR Department on sick leave benefits.
- g. This policy applies to any person employed by the City or detailed to the City by a sister agency. This policy does not apply to any employee detailed to the City by a foundation, charitable organization, or outside employer; those such employees should follow the telework policy of their official employer.

### **III. Considerations for Telework Approval**

Department Heads must designate which job titles within their Department have the ability to work from home and notify DHR of that designation prior to allowing any employee to work from home. When determining whether or not telework is appropriate, supervisors must consider whether or not it is operationally feasible for the employee to perform the core duties of their job away from the worksite. Work to be performed from an alternate worksite must be part of the employee's job description. Supervisors should also consider whether the work performed can be adequately assessed to ensure that work is being performed and whether or not teleworking would pose any adverse risks to the operations of the department or the City. Specifically, supervisors should consider the following questions:

- a. Can the work performed be monitored by output versus time spent doing the job?
- b. Is the job characterized by clearly defined tasks and deliverables?
- c. Is there sufficient work for the employee to perform away from the worksite?
- d. What are the technical and equipment needs required to perform the work and can those technical and equipment needs be readily accessed from home?
- e. Does the work require minimal need for on-site files, records, special equipment, software, or other resources?
- f. Does the work require limited need for face-to-face contact with the public or colleagues?
- g. Can communication with the public or colleagues be satisfied remotely?
- h. Can the work be performed remotely without unnecessary risk to the security of data, networks, or client confidentiality?
- i. If the position is supervisory or managerial, can the employee effectively supervise their subordinate employees remotely?

### **IV. Requirements for Telework**

If it has been determined based on the Considerations for Telework described in Section III above that the employee can work from home, the following requirements apply:

- a. The employee must receive advance written approval from the Department Head before telework can begin.
- b. The employee's supervisor and timekeeper must be notified in advance that the employee has been authorized for telework.
- c. The employee must e-mail both their supervisor and designated timekeeper when the employee begins work that day and then must e-mail again when the employee ends work that day.
- d. The employee must work a full 7 hours on City of Chicago business for each telework day.
- e. The employee must keep the Department's core business hours.
- f. The employee must check e-mail periodically throughout the day and must be available via e-mail and phone.

- g. Employees who telework must complete a written certification at the conclusion of each work week which provides the following:
  - i. The employee worked the requisite 7 hours (or the hours designated to work from home);
  - ii. The employee must provide a list or description of the work performed while teleworking;
  - iii. That the information provided by the employee is true and correct and that the employee acknowledges that they may be disciplined if the information they provide is false.
- h. Employees must also sign a Telework Agreement (*see* Attachment A). The agreement requires the employee to certify that his or her home includes a safe, private, and quiet space sufficient to allow the employee to perform the core duties of the job, and that the employee has technology and equipment needed to perform the job. The agreement also provides, among other things, that the City is not responsible for the costs of the employee's equipment and facilities utilized during telework, including without limitation home office space, internet, computer and phone equipment.

**V. Termination of Telework**

- a. The Department Head can terminate any telework arrangement or agreement or modify any telework arrangement or agreement at any time.
- b. Any employee who is unable to abide by the terms of a Telework agreement and the guidelines of this policy, must notify their supervisor immediately. The supervisor, in consultation with the Department Head, is responsible for determining if the employee can continue to participate in the telework arrangement.