

MENDOCINO COUNTY POLICY # 55	MENDOCINO COUNTY COVID-19 TEMPORARY POLICY: TEMPORARY TELEWORK GUIDELINES
ADOPTED: April 7, 2020	ADOPTED BY: Minute Order

Section I – Background and Purpose

Background:

Mendocino County encourages the use of teleworking as a viable, voluntary option for County employees. Events over the last few years and unfolding today can make it a valuable resource for the continuity of services and operations.

County Departments are encouraged to review their operations ahead of potential crises to identify positions that, in an emergency of unknown duration, can assist in maintaining program continuity from their homes or other sites through teleworking.

Additionally, in event of quarantines and other reactions to potential communicable diseases, departments may need to prepare for a significant portion of their workforce to work from home for a period of unknown duration.

Purpose:

The County has developed this Temporary Telework Guideline for approving and implementing telework arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic. County departments may adopt the use of these temporary telework guidelines, or components of it, when crafting a temporary telework program which meets their operational needs during emergency periods.

Term:

This program is effective March 16, 2020 and will remain in effect until the end of the County declared COVID-19 Emergency.

What is Telework?

Telework is an available option which can be used to create a flexible work environment. The County defines telework as work conducted by an employee at a work site other than a County office or other County location.

The County recognizes the benefits of telework, including:

- Increasing the County's ability to provide essential services during/following an emergency;
- Reducing the need to travel particularly if travel and roads have been compromised from an event;
- Creating flexibility so employees can still be productive if schools are closed.

Section II - Department Telework Programs

Department temporary telework programs (Programs) should identify the functional program areas and staff positions where telework will be both practical and beneficial. All Programs must ensure that the terms and conditions of employment for the temporary teleworker (employee) and the manager/supervisor remain unchanged. Most notably, performance expectations, schedule for telework hours, overtime, compensation and vacation schedules must conform to existing County, department and/or temporary telework related policies, guidelines and procedures, as well as the provisions within the respective Memoranda of Understanding (MOU).

Telework Program Eligibility

Eligibility is based on many criteria including assessment of the job requirements and responsibilities. Due to the nature of the services offered by the County, employees in some job classifications may not be approved for teleworking. The Department Director or their designee retains the discretion to determine employee eligibility subject to business needs, job requirements, probationary status, and employee performance.

Telework Program Roles and Responsibilities

Below are the standard roles and responsibilities for Department Heads, managers/ supervisors, employees (teleworkers), and the County Human Resources Department, with respect to temporary teleworking in the County.

Department Heads

- Examine department operations and identify areas where temporary telework will be successful;
- If operationally feasible, establish a temporary program in the department which adheres to all applicable County and department policies and procedures;
- Ensure managers and supervisors are advised of department Temporary Telework Guidelines, the use of Temporary Telework Agreements, and the IS process to request VPN access; and Approve or deny (or have designee approve/deny) Temporary Telework Agreements.

Managers and Supervisors

- Educate prospective and current employees about the Temporary Telework Guidelines;
- Recommend Temporary Telework Agreements and ensure documentation and/or verifications are provided;
- Obtain approval of the Department head or designee for all Temporary Telework Agreements;
- Inform teleworkers that failure to comply with established County and department policies and procedures, as well as teleworker requirements, may result in ending the Temporary Teleworker Agreement;
- Provide specific, measurable, and attainable performance expectations for the teleworker, such as specific assignments, corresponding deadlines, and the quality of the work expected;
- Monitor teleworkers' ability to deliver on performance expectations, assignments, deadlines, as well as quality and quantity of work;
- Periodically review telework schedules;
- Maintain copies of all signed Temporary Telework Agreements; and
- Coordinate with department IS and fiscal staff regarding potential budget impacts (special IT equipment, IT services, etc.)

Employees

- Confirm that current position has been identified by the department as a position suitable for temporary telework;
- Submit a Temporary Telework Agreement form;
- As applicable, submit a request to enable VPN access via the Mendocino County Virtual Private Network (VPN) Access Agreement to the IS Department.

When temporary telework is determined to be a viable work option, employees must work with their supervisor/manager to:

- Record and report all time worked accurately.

- Acquire the skills necessary to meet Department requirements and operate independently from a telework site;
- Establish and maintain an acceptable and safe telework space;
- Develop and follow an agreed upon telework schedule as documented in a Temporary Telework Agreement;
- Adhere to all County and department policies and procedures regarding information security;
- Maintain the same communication standards applicable within the office environment (i.e. checking voicemails, emails, work queues, etc. on a regular basis);
- Report any workplace/security incidents immediately to their manager/supervisor;
- Report any improperly functioning, damaged, lost, or stolen County-issued equipment assigned to the teleworker.
- Comply with tax laws (The County is not responsible for substantiating a teleworker's claim of tax deductions for operation of a home office used to perform work. Employees should seek advice from a tax advisor concerning home office deductions).

Human Resources Department

- Assist County departments in implementing Temporary Telework Guidelines;
- Maintain and update the County's Temporary Telework Guidelines.

Complete a Temporary Telework Agreement

Once the employees have been identified, they, with their supervisor/manager can complete a Temporary Telework Agreement.

- The Department reserves the right to cancel a Temporary Telework Agreement at any time and for any reason.
- All County-owned equipment issued to an employee in order to telework must be returned immediately upon the end of his/her telework arrangement.

Other Considerations for Teleworking

Information Security

Security of confidential information is of great importance to the County. Teleworkers, like all County employees, are expected to adhere to all Countywide and department policies and procedures regarding information security. For more information, see the County Information Technology Policy #22.

Teleworking employees and their supervisors shall identify any confidential, private, or personal information and records to be accessed and ensure appropriate safeguards are used to protect them. A department may require employees to work in private locations when handling confidential or sensitive material. Departments may prohibit employees from printing confidential information in teleworking locations to avoid breaches of confidentiality. Employees may not disclose confidential or private files, records, materials, or information, and may not allow access to County networks or databases to anyone who is not authorized to have access.

Supplies, Equipment, and Costs

The costs associated with telework are primarily the responsibility of the teleworker/employee. However, the County will provide standard office supplies (pens, paper, pencils, etc.) and in some instances may provide equipment or software, if feasible and approved by the department.

Work Related Injury While Teleworking

In the event an employee suffers a work-related injury while teleworking, workers' compensation laws apply just as they would if such an injury occurred in the office. Employees are to follow County policy for reporting work injuries by notifying their manager/supervisor immediately and completing all necessary documents regarding the injury. The County assumes no liability for injuries that occur outside of the performance of the employee's duties and/or outside of the employee's scheduled telework hours. Employees are liable for injuries to third parties (i.e. family members, other non-County employees, etc.) that enter the designated work space.

Mendocino County Temporary Telework Agreement

It is understood that telework days must be scheduled in advance and approved by the supervisor/manager. At certain times, it may be necessary for the telework schedule to be revised to ensure critical deadlines are met or to attend meetings. Any changes by the employee in the agreed upon schedule must be pre-approved, documented and appended to the Telework Agreement.

Employee Information

Name: _____ Employee #: _____

Job Title: _____ Department: _____

The following temporary telework schedule is being established from _____ to _____:

Primary Telework Site (Address)			
Number of Telework Days		<input type="checkbox"/> per week	<input type="checkbox"/> per month
Telework Days of Week/Month Includes duty free lunch	<input type="checkbox"/> Monday <input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday <input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday		
	Monday	From:	To:
	Tuesday	From:	To:
	Wednesday	From:	To:
	Thursday	From:	To:
	Friday	From:	To:
	Saturday	From:	To:
	Sunday	From:	To:

The employee agrees to complete assignments to be worked on at home by the agreed upon delivery dates. The employee further agrees to report all time spent teleworking honestly and accurately. The supervisor/manager will provide the teleworker/employee with all work assignments.

☐ I agree to accurately record and submit the hours I work while teleworking and to record leave accruals or unpaid time for hours not worked.

☐ I understand and agree that I must comply with all procedures designed to protect sensitive County information, including information that is confidential, private, personal, or otherwise sensitive while teleworking.

☐ I understand and agree that teleworking is not a substitute for dependent care.

☐ I acknowledge that my designated workspace complies with all health and safety requirements.

☐ Unless otherwise agreed with my supervisor/manager, I understand and agree that my department is not required to provide me with any equipment or supplies I may need while teleworking.

☐ I have discussed this application and agreement with my supervisor. I agree to comply with all terms and conditions in this telework application and agreement. I understand that my teleworking agreement can be ended for a business reason at any time.

☐ I understand that the terms of this Agreement will remain in effect until the Agreement is terminated or amended in writing by either of the parties, or the approved teleworking period ends.

☐ I understand that management reserves the right to revoke the telework arrangement at any time and that it can be superseded by the need to report as a disaster service worker.

I have reviewed the conditions of this Temporary Teleworker Agreement with my manager/supervisor and agree to the conditions.

Employee Signature

Date

Department

County Telephone Number

Telework Phone Number

Manager/Supervisor

Signature Date

Department Director or Designee

Signature Date

Copy to: Human Resources; Personnel File