

## **POLICY 823 TELECOMMUTING**

- 1. Policy.** Eau Claire County is committed to creating a work environment and culture where the needs of our clients, employees, and organization are aligned. Therefore, we strive to be flexible in our approach to work styles and location. Eau Claire County offers employees the ability to perform certain job duties away from the central work site. This policy refers to those employees working a set schedule from a remote work area. Occasional work off-site; including work while traveling on County business, does not constitute telecommuting.
  
- 2. Eligibility**
  - 2.1** The determination that a position may or may not be appropriate for a telecommuting arrangement is made on a case-by-case basis at the department level with approval from the director.
  
  - 2.2** Departments evaluate whether a position is suitable for telecommuting based on the nature of the work that is being performed. Generally, requests to telecommute should be considered when:
    - 2.2.1** The employee's duties can be fulfilled within the telecommuting structure.
  
    - 2.2.2** Telecommuting fits with the needs of the department.
  
    - 2.2.3** Telecommuting provides for space savings or increased productivity.
  
    - 2.2.4** The employee has demonstrated sustained high performance, and the manager believes the employee can maintain the expected quantity and quality of work while telecommuting.
  
    - 2.2.5** The department can maintain quality of service for clients, employees, and members of the community.
  
  - 2.3** Generally, requests to telecommute should not be considered when:
    - 2.3.1** The job requires the employee's physical presence or telecommuting would impair the department's efficiency.
  
    - 2.3.2** The employee's current job duties require frequent supervision, direction or input from others who are onsite.

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- 2.3.3 The employee's job duties require that the employee provide frequent supervision, direction or input to other employees who are onsite.
- 2.3.4 The employee's performance evaluations do not indicate sustained high performance or the ability to work independently.
- 2.3.5 The employee has a documented attendance problem.
- 2.3.6 The employee has less than six months of service with Eau Claire County.

### 3. Request Process

- 3.1 An employee requesting a telecommuting arrangement should complete an electronic *Telecommuting Request (Appendix 823-A.)*
- 3.2 The employee's direct supervisor and/or department head must review and approve the request prior to the review and approval of the director.

### 4. Expectations

- 4.1 Telecommuting is not intended to permit staff to have time to work at other jobs, provide dependent care during work hours, or run their own businesses.
- 4.2 Employees who telecommute must comply with all Eau Claire County policies and department work rules.
- 4.3 Employees who telecommute are expected to have regularly scheduled work hours, to be fully accessible during those hours, and to attend necessary meetings and appointments in person.
- 4.4 Non-exempt employees who telecommute are required to obtain telecommuting approval from the department head and Human Resources Director, report their work hours and take required rest breaks and meal periods.
- 4.5 Employees entering into a telecommuting agreement may be required to forfeit use of a personal office or workstation in favor of a shared arrangement to maximize organization office space needs.
- 4.6 Employees must provide broad band internet access at their own expense.

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- 4.7** The County will not be responsible for operating costs, home maintenance, or any other incidental costs associated with the use of the employee's residence for a telecommuting location.
  - 4.8** Meetings with clients and or visitors conducting business with Eau Claire County will not be held in the employee's telecommuting location.
- 5.** HIPAA/Protected Health Information
  - 5.1** Employees in a telecommuting arrangement must comply with all Eau Claire County policies and procedures concerning the handling of Protected Health Information, as well as use of computers, internet and email.
  - 5.2** It is expected employees fully review and are familiar with these policies.
  - 5.3** Employees will limit consumer specific information in their possession outside of County offices to that necessary to perform their duties.
  - 5.4** The telecommuter's signed Eau Claire County Employee Policy Manual, Confidentiality and Ethics Agreement, and any other applicable computer, network, and telecommunication laws, rules and permissions remain in full effect while telecommuting.
- 6.** Travel Expenses
  - 6.1** A telecommuter is entitled to mileage reimbursement as indicated by the Internal Revenue Service:
    - 6.1.1** The first one way trip of the day from home to another location for the purpose of paid employment is not reimbursable as a work expense and is considered the responsibility of the telecommuter.
    - 6.1.2** This rule also applies to the last trip of the day from another location for the purpose of work to the home.
    - 6.1.3** In the event the first trip and/or the last trip of the day is longer than the mileage between the employee's onsite work location and the employee's home, the employee will be reimbursed for the difference. If the first trip of the day is shorter than the normal distance from the onsite work location to the employee's home, this mileage would not be reimbursable.

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**7. Location**

**7.1** Employees telecommuting must have a safe and ergonomically correct workspace in order to telecommute.

**7.2** Employees may request a representative of Eau Claire County to visit their telecommuting worksite to conduct an ergonomic assessment and inspect for possible work hazards.

**7.2.1** Employees are encouraged to conduct an ergonomic self-evaluation of their telecommuting location by using Appendix 823 - C.

**7.3** Employees will work at a designated location as outlined in their telecommuting request.

**8. Equipment**

**8.1** Departments will work with the Information Systems department to determine, with information supplied by the employee and the supervisor, the appropriate equipment needs for each telecommuting arrangement on a case-by-case basis.

**8.2** All equipment provided by Eau Claire County will remain the property of Eau Claire County and is subject to the same business use restrictions as if located at the organization's on-site work location.

**8.3** The telecommuter will sign an inventory of all office property and agrees to take appropriate action to protect the items from damage or theft.

**8.4** Upon termination of employment, all Eau Claire County property will be returned to the County.

**9. Liability**

**9.1** The County will not be liable for damages to the employee's property resulting from participation in the telecommuting program.

**9.2** A designated representative of Eau Claire County will visit the employee's telecommuting worksite to conduct an ergonomic assessment and inspect for possible work hazards. Repeat inspections will occur on an as-needed basis.

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- 9.3** Injuries sustained by the employee while at his or her telecommuting work location and in conjunction with his or her regular work duties are normally covered under Eau Claire County's workers' compensation policy.
- 9.4** Telecommuting employees are responsible for notifying the employer of such injuries in accordance with Eau Claire County Policy 715 Injuries/Illnesses.
- 9.5** The employee is liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to his or her work location. Employees will not meet with clients and/or visitors conducting business with Eau Claire County at the employee's telecommuting location.
  - 9.5.1** By participating in the telecommuting arrangement, the employee agrees to hold the County harmless against any and all claims including injuries to others at the telecommuting location.

**10. Telecommuting Agreement**

- 10.1** An agreement between the telecommuting employee and the department is required, and will be placed in the employee's personnel file.
- 10.2** The telecommuting agreement may be modified or terminated any time, with appropriate notice.
- 10.3** Normally, at minimum, a two-week notice should be provided whenever possible in advance of ending or changing the agreement.
- 10.4** In all cases, telecommuting agreements must be renewed annually.

**11. Appendices.**

- 11.1** Telecommuting Request Form (Appendix 823-A)
- 11.2** Telecommuting Agreement Form (Appendix 823-B)
- 11.3** Office Ergonomic Self Evaluation Guide (Appendix 823-C)

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