

# City of Rock Island Telecommuting Policy and Procedure

## Objective

Telecommuting allows employees to work at home, on the road or in a satellite location for all or part of their workweek. The City considers telecommuting to be a viable, flexible 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 city-wide benefit, and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with the City of Rock Island.

## Procedures

Telecommuting can be informal, such as working from home for a short-term project 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 and may be discontinued at any time by the City. Every effort will be made to provide seven (7) days' notice of such change to accommodate commuting, child care and other issues that may arise from the termination of a telecommuting arrangement. There may be instances, however, when no notice is possible.

## Eligibility

Under ordinary circumstances, individuals requesting formal telecommuting arrangements must be employed with the City of Rock Island for a minimum of 12 months of continuous, regular employment and must have a satisfactory performance record. However, there may be circumstances, as set for later in this Policy, where the City determines it is the best interest to waive this requirement – such as in response to a pandemic or other emergency.

Before entering into any telecommuting agreement, the employee and department director, 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.
- 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 manager 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.

- Anticipated Term of Teleworking Arrangement. There may be instances wherein the City may determine it is in the best interest to temporarily allow an employee to telecommute, or in which the City allows an employee to telecommute as a reasonable accommodation to a disability or medical condition; in such situations it should be understood by the City and the Employee that such employee may not be able to perform all of his or her position's essential job functions remotely. In such circumstances, the City reserves the right to modify or discontinue the accommodations if it results in an undue burden to the City and in accordance with the law.

If the employee and department director agree, and the Human Resource department concurs, a telecommuting agreement will be prepared and signed by all parties, and the employee may begin telecommuting.

Evaluation of telecommuter performance may include regular interaction by phone and e-mail between the employee and the director or supervisor, and weekly face-to-face meetings to discuss work progress and problems. At any time the director or supervisor deems warranted, the employee and department director or supervisor may complete an evaluation of the arrangement and make recommendations for continuance or modifications.

### **Equipment**

On a case-by-case basis, the City of Rock Island will determine, with information supplied by the employee and the department director or 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. The City of Rock Island accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment. The City of Rock Island 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 City of Rock Island 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 City, unless other arrangements have been made.

The City of Rock Island will supply the employee with appropriate office supplies (pens, paper, etc.) as deemed necessary. The City of Rock Island will also reimburse the employee for business-related expenses, such as phone calls and shipping costs, that

are reasonably incurred in carrying out the employee's job in accordance with City policy governing these expenses and federal or state law.

The employee will establish an appropriate work environment within his or her home for work purposes. The City of Rock Island will not be responsible for costs associated with the setup of the employee's home office, such as internet service (which includes internet access and any usage charges), 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. 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 City's workers' compensation policy. Telecommuting employees are responsible for notifying their department director or supervisor 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. Although an individual employee's schedule may be modified to accommodate child care needs, 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.

### **Time Worked**

Telecommuting employees who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act will be required to accurately record all hours worked using the City of Rock Island's time-keeping system. Hours worked in excess of those scheduled per day and per workweek require the advance approval of the telecommuter's department director or supervisor. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the immediate termination of the telecommuting agreement and other disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

### **Ad Hoc and Emergency Arrangements**

Temporary telecommuting arrangements may be approved for circumstances such as inclement weather, special projects, business travel, pandemic situations or other emergency situations. These arrangements are approved on an as-needed basis only, with no expectation of ongoing continuance. Additionally, under such Ad Hoc or

Emergency Arrangements, the City may, in its discretion, waive the general requirement under this Policy that the employee must have twelve (12) months of regular, continuous employment with the City and a satisfactory performance record.

Other informal, short-term arrangements may be made for employees on family or medical leave to the extent practical for the employee and the organization and with the consent of the employee's health care provider, if appropriate.

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

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