


# CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

NUMBER: 20-03	DATE: August 21, 2020
REVISIONS:	
ISSUED BY: City Manager	SIGNED: 

**Subject: Teleworking Policy**

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide tools and guidance to employees of the City of Grand Rapids regarding telecommuting. Employees are authorized to telecommute at the discretion of their supervisor, based on needs of service and the ability to perform necessary work remotely. In order to work remotely, employees must receive supervisor permission and complete a teleworking agreement with their supervisor and comply with the expectations listed in this policy. The requirement to complete a Teleworking Agreement can be suspended during short term emergencies at the discretion of Management. In such a circumstance, an agreement should be signed as soon as safely possible.

Telework arrangements are considered an employment benefit and not a vested employee right. While reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate such arrangements where possible, factors such as work performance history, immediate business need and workload balance may factor into approval decisions. All terms and conditions of employment with the City remain unchanged, except those specifically addressed in this policy.

Management retains the right to suspend or modify this policy on a temporary or permanent basis for any reason at any time.

**Policy:**

**1) Eligibility**

Any employee whose work may reasonably and effectively be conducted from a remote location *may* be eligible to telework for some portion of their work hours.

**2) Telework Agreement**

a) Employees are expected to complete a telework agreement. The requirement to complete a telework agreement may be suspended during emergencies at the discretion of Management.

- i) Under such circumstances, a telework agreement should be completed as soon as it is reasonably and safely possible to do so.
- b) Supervisor and employee must agree to the terms and understand the expectations.

### **3) Employee Expectations**

- a) Employees must be accessible (via phone, videoconferencing, and/or other electronic means) and be productive during agreed-upon work hours.
- b) Nonexempt employees must record all hours worked and meal periods taken in accordance with regular timekeeping practices.
- c) Employees must obtain supervisor approval prior to adjusting their agreed-upon work schedule including, but not limited to, flex scheduling or working unscheduled overtime hours.
- d) Employees must report to designated work location as necessary upon directive from their supervisor.
- e) Employees will communicate regularly with their supervisor and co-workers, which may include a weekly written, phone, and/or videoconferencing report of work outcomes to their supervisor.
- f) Employees will comply with all City of Grand Rapids rules, policies, practices, and instructions that would apply if the employee were working at the employer's work location.
- g) Employees will maintain satisfactory performance standards.
- h) Employees will plan for regular dependent care and understands that telecommuting is not a substitute for dependent care. In emergency circumstances, exceptions can be made for employees with caregiving responsibilities.
- i) Employees will maintain a safe and secure work environment at all times.
- j) Employees will allow the appropriate City representative to have access to the telecommuting location for purposes of assessing safety and security, upon reasonable notice by Management.
- k) Employees will report work-related injuries to their supervisor as soon as practicable.
- l) During or after the telework period, the employee will complete an evaluation report of the teleworking experience to assess the program and provide feedback that can improve future telework opportunities.

### **4) Supervisor Expectations**

- a) Supervisors must review employee work schedules. Supervisors must be clear about expectations with employees for maintaining current work schedules or openness to flexing scheduling based on needs of service. Supervisors are encouraged to allow flexibility, especially during emergency situations.
- b) Supervisors must consider which routine responsibilities/tasks can be fulfilled while working remotely and how it will impact operations, customers, or co-workers. It is the supervisor's responsibility to review processes to minimize the impact on employees working in the office.

- c) Supervisors should proactively encourage staff to maintain overall communication expectations.
- d) Supervisors should determine if there are special projects, tasks, or trainings that can be advanced while employees are working remotely. Supervisors should assign meaningful projects that advance departmental objectives and avoid busy work.
- e) Supervisors should communicate the expectation related to attendance at events or meetings in the telework agreement. Supervisors should consider alternate ways for staff to connect such as video-conferencing or other online collaboration platforms.
- f) Supervisors should make a communication and accountability plan. Supervisors should tell employees how often they should send updates on work progress and what those updates should include. Supervisors should also communicate how quickly they expect the employee to respond while telecommuting and the best ways for the employee to contact the supervisor while working remotely.
- g) Supervisors have the discretion of requiring their employees to utilize a standard daily reporting tool, available through the Labor Relations Office, to track progress on assignments and projects.
- h) Supervisors should conduct team meetings and one-to-one check-ins. The frequency of check-ins will be left to supervisor discretion. If needed, supervisors are encouraged to modify schedules to accommodate alternative work schedules that may exist.
- i) Supervisors should complete an evaluation report for the period of time an employee teleworks. Assess what has worked well and what were the challenges. This feedback is critical to having continued telework opportunities.

## **5) Technology Requirements**

If departmental resources allow, the City of Grand Rapids will provide all employees with the necessary technology to perform their jobs including the following: laptop/desktop computers, peripheral devices, and VPN access if required. (During emergency situations, management may reduce technology requirements.)

- a) The employee and supervisor shall work with Information Technology to maintain an inventory of all equipment provided to the employee, including associated serial numbers/asset tags.
- b) All employees are financially responsible for their own internet access; however, departments may issue a mobile hotspot for those that need it.
- c) All employees are expected to utilize VPN to access the City's network where direct access to network systems or files is required.
- d) City of Grand Rapids equipment will not be used by anyone other than the employee and only for business-related work. As it relates to computers/laptops, all work done on behalf of the City of Grand Rapids should be done on City of Grand Rapids equipment.
- e) Employees must not make any changes to security or administrative settings on City of Grand Rapids equipment. The employee understands that all tools and resources provided by the City shall remain the property of the City at all times.

- f) All corporate data will be used and stored on corporate authorized programs. Personally-owned programs such as Gmail, Google Drive, Drop Box will not be used to house or transport corporate data. All communication as a City employee while conducting business for the City of Grand Rapids must be done through City owned communications platforms.
- g) The employee agrees to protect City tools and resources from theft or damage and to report theft or damage to their supervisor immediately.
- h) The employee agrees to comply with City of Grand Rapids' policies and expectations regarding information security. The employee will be expected to ensure the protection of proprietary company and customer information accessible from their home office.

## **6) Safety Requirements**

Employees have a responsibility to maintain a safe workspace when teleworking just as they would be required to do so within the workplace. The following considerations should be evaluated before and during teleworking assignments.

### **a) General Safety**

- i) Floors should be clear and free of hazards
- ii) The work area should be reasonably quiet and free of distractions
- iii) Temperature, ventilation, and lighting should be adequate
- iv) First aid supplies should be readily available
- v) Walkways, aisles and doorways should be unobstructed
- vi) There should be an available exit from the workspace, as well as to the exterior of the building (door or window)
- vii) There should be a working smoke detector covering the designated workplace
- viii) The workspace should be kept free of trash, clutter and flammable liquids

### **b) Electrical Safety**

- i) Computer equipment should be connected to a surge protector
- ii) Electrical outlets should be grounded with three-pronged plugs
- iii) The electrical system should be adequate to power required office equipment
- iv) Electrical cords, plugs, outlets and panels should be in good condition – no exposed/damaged wiring
- v) Extension cords should not be used as a long-term solution to provide power to the work area
- vi) Extension cords and power strips should not be tangled
- vii) Electrical cords should be run in non-traffic areas, should not run under rugs and should not be nailed or stapled in

### **c) Ergonomics**

- i) Office furniture and equipment should be ergonomically correct
- ii) Chair should be sturdy and adjustable, with a backrest and casters that are appropriate for the floor surface
- iii) Feet should reach the floor when seated, or fully supported by a footrest

- iv) Forearms should be near parallel with the floor while typing
- v) Monitor should be 20-24 inches from the eyes, with the top of the screen slightly below eye level
- vi) Screen should be free of noticeable glare
- vii) Ensure there is adequate lighting at the workstation

7) **Additional Resources**

To support employees and supervisors in teleworking successfully, the Human Resources Department has developed additional tools and resources that can be found on the City's Digital Workplace.