



**Office of Human Resources
Standard Operating Procedure
HR SOP #302**

Subject: Telework

Effective Date: August 16, 2018

Policy Statement:

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources advocates teleworking as a viable work option that benefits both the employer and the employee. DNR offers teleworking to promote increased employee satisfaction, quality of life, efficiency, and productivity, to provide cost savings to the department and to demonstrate a commitment to the environment. Teleworking is a voluntary agreement between an employee and the supervisor, and, as such, is a privilege, not an entitlement.

Definitions:

Alternate Workplace: A work site other than the employee's primary workplace.

Eligible Employee: An employee, in an eligible job, who has been identified by the employee's supervisor as satisfactorily meeting performance standards, terms and conditions of employment of their job. The employee shall have had no adverse actions during the current or immediately preceding review period.

Eligible Job: A job having measurable quantitative or qualitative results-oriented standards of performance that is structured to be performed independently of others; with minimal need for support; and can be scheduled at least one day a pay period to participate in teleworking without impacting service quality or organizational operations.

Mobile Worker: An employee who travels continuously and whose current work location is his/her home or field office (not primary office). The duties of these jobs generally require the employee to meet and work off-site or at numerous locations dispersed throughout a geographic area. A mobile worker is a teleworker.

Occasional Teleworker: A teleworker, who with the approval of their supervisor, works at home or at an alternative worksite on an infrequent basis. Approval is usually task or project specific and normally approved at least the day before the employee teleworks.

Primary Workplace: A teleworker's usual and customary workplace.

Teleworker: An employee who for at least one or more days in a particular work period works at home, in the field or a satellite office to perform an assigned job.

Teleworking: Working at a location other than the employee's primary workplace.

Teleworking Agreement: The signed document that outlines the understanding between the Department and the employee regarding the teleworking arrangement.

Procedure:

Given the nature and variety of work performed in the Department, not all jobs will be well suited for periodically teleworking. Therefore, many of the jobs cannot be effectively accomplished through teleworking.

The identification of jobs and/or candidates available for teleworking is the responsibility of the Division Director/Designee. The characteristics of an effective and successful teleworking program include:

- An assessment that an employee's job is suitable for teleworking;
- A thorough and objective assessment of an employee's past performance, requisite job knowledge, and other work related characteristics;
- The immediate supervisor's cooperation with and support for teleworking, as well as his or her proficiency/ability to effectively manage the teleworking employee in a non-traditional work environment; and
- The teleworking employee's commitment to an effective and productive telework program.

Jobs suitable for teleworking are characterized by clearly defined results. A teleworker's performance is measured by results rather than presence at the main work location; therefore, it is critical to ensure that performance expectations are clearly defined so that a proper evaluation can be conducted at designated intervals as outlined in the telework agreement. For information regarding performance management see <http://dnrintranet.org/hr/performance-management> and HR Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) #701, *Performance Management*.

Teleworking is a voluntary arrangement between an employee and his or her supervisor, and is not an entitlement. Teleworking agreements may be modified or terminated by the supervisor, or employee, with reasonable notice.

Eligibility:

Division Directors or designees determine which employee(s) and/or job(s) are eligible for teleworking. Hourly employees are typically not granted permission to telework. Highest priority will be given to voluntary telework agreements in which little or no additional equipment or support is required. Employees shall not be required to telework unless teleworking is a job requirement.

To telework, an employee must:

- Be employed in, or assigned to, a position which requires or which is conducive to teleworking;
- Have been employed with the Department for at least six months;
- Have and maintain an annual leave balance of at least forty hours;

- Have consistently met established productivity levels;
- Have a rating of 3 - Successful Performer or higher on the most recent previous performance evaluation; and
- Have had no disciplinary actions during the current or previous performance year.

Selection Considerations:

Jobs generally well suited for teleworking have the following characteristics:

- Infrequent face-to-face communication requirements - instead, communication can be managed by telephone, text message, email, facsimile, etc.;
- Employee generally works alone handling information (e.g., work tasks incorporate such components as reading, writing, word processing, planning);
- Clearly defined results;
- Measurable work activities with objectives having identifiable time frames and check points;
- Content versus process oriented;
- Tasks which require concentration and/or large blocks of time when the employee works independently of others;
- Work which can be performed without close supervision; and
- Minimal requirements for special equipment.

Employees generally suited for Teleworking have the following Characteristics/Traits:

- Possesses good oral and written communication skills. It is critical to the success of a telework arrangement that an employee establishes and maintains frequent communication with his or her supervisor and other co-workers;
- Has a demonstrated history of successful job performance in his or her current job assignment as well as in previous position(s);
- Is self-motivated and responsible;
- Is familiar with requirements of his or her position;
- Can work independently;
- Is adaptable; and
- Is results-oriented.

Equipment:

In most cases, the Department will not provide equipment for a home-based teleworking. If necessary, the employee and his or her supervisor will recommend equipment needs to the applicable Division Director/Designee for authorization. Maintenance on equipment provided by the Department will be performed by an authorized Department/contracted technician. The

Department will repair or replace lost, damaged, or stolen Department equipment provided the employee has taken appropriate precautions to safeguard the equipment.

The employees may not use Department-provided equipment for personal use or allow the use of Department equipment by a non-employee. Personally owned software may not be used on Department-provided equipment. Software which is not appropriately licensed may not be installed on Department equipment.

The employee's work location is subject to Department audits and security reviews, as appropriate. Employees must return equipment to the Department when requested by Division management or when the telework arrangement ends or is terminated. All expenses to employee owned equipment (e.g., maintenance, repair, insurance) are the employee's responsibility.

Department files must be kept on separate disks. Software, which is not owned or licensed, may not be run if Department data resides on the computer or the computer accesses a Department network. All Department information must be properly secured at the end of each business day.

For additional information regarding the use of agency equipment, see HR SOP #404, *Appropriate Use of Information Technology Resources*.

The misuse of Department-provided equipment will be grounds for terminating the telework arrangement and may subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.

Work Rules:

Teleworkers are expected to follow proper employee conduct rules as per HR SOP #401, *Employee Conduct*.

An employee's compensation and benefits (including leave and holidays) are not impacted by a telework arrangement.

Teleworking employees remain under the Department's Performance Management system and are required to participate fully in the process. Employees' performance will be assessed in a manner similar to all non-teleworking employees.

Each teleworker will have an established work schedule. Employees may, with the approval of their supervisor, work either a standard, five-day work week or one of two authorized alternative schedules referenced in DNR HR SOP #301, *Alternative Work Schedules*. Those who are authorized to regularly Telework and are also on a compressed work week schedule should limit teleworking to one day per week. More extensive telework arrangements for those also on compressed work weeks must be approved by the Division Director.

Approval of a schedule which includes regular teleworking more than 2 days per week is rare, is not appropriate for most jobs, and requires approval by the Division Director.

Teleworking employees will have regularly scheduled work hours agreed upon by their supervisor. Employees must be accessible by telephone, and/or cell phone to their supervisor, customers and co-workers during their agreed upon regular business hours, regardless of the

work location. Availability via telephone and telephone protocols during teleworking should not differ from the office setting. Completely unstructured work arrangements (i.e., scheduled work days and work hours) are not permitted.

Each scheduled work day will include a non-paid lunch period of at least thirty minutes. Proper monitoring of a teleworker's time and attendance is critical to the success of each telework arrangement. Supervisors must ensure that all hours worked and leave taken is accounted for. Employees are required to complete a timesheet at the conclusion of each pay period and return it to their supervisor. This timesheet will include all hours worked on a daily basis as well as any leave taken. See HR SOP #502, *Time and Leave Keeping*.

Safety and Inspections:

Each teleworking employee is responsible for maintaining their home or alternative work space in a safe condition and free from hazards or other dangers. The Department reserves the right to have a home work space inspected (usually by the teleworker's immediate supervisor or reviewing manager) to ensure safety compliance and adherence with the telework program requirements regarding the work space and furnishings. Any remodeling or electrical work is at the employee's expense.

Workers' Compensation:

Teleworkers are covered by Workers' Compensation during work hours and while performing work functions in the designated home or alternative work area. The employee's home or alternative is considered an extension of the Department's workspace. Consistent with Department guidelines, employees must report any work-related injury to their supervisor as soon as possible after the accident/injury occurs. See HR SOP #507, *Workers' Compensation*.

Tax Implications:

Teleworkers are fully responsible to determine any federal, state, and local tax implications resulting from working at home and are responsible for satisfying any personal tax obligations relative to teleworking. Employees are encouraged to discuss these issues with their personal tax advisor.

Dependent Care:

Teleworking is not a substitute for dependent care. Employees will manage dependent care and personal responsibilities in a manner that allows the successful completion of job responsibilities.

Teleworking Agreement:

Each teleworker and his or her immediate supervisor will jointly sign a *Teleworking Agreement* (Attachment 1) that can be modified or terminated by the Department, supervisor, or the employee with reasonable notice. The Agreement must be reviewed and renewed annually at the beginning of the fiscal year in conjunction with the Performance Management Planning and evaluation process.

Teleworkers will complete the following additional forms, if required by their managers. Retain these optional forms in the employee's management file, if completed.

<http://doas.ga.gov/assets/Human%20Resources%20Administration/State%20Telework%20Policy/Attachment%20B%20-%20Teleworking%20Self-Assessment.pdf>

<http://doas.ga.gov/assets/Human%20Resources%20Administration/State%20Telework%20Policy/Attachment%20C%20-%20Telework%20Work-Away%20self%20certification.pdf>

Employee and Supervisor/Manager Responsibilities:

Employees shall:

- Prepare a memo to the supervisor requesting approval of a teleworking arrangement;
- Become familiar with the provisions of this procedure, the *Teleworking Agreement*, and other Division guidelines;
- Complete and sign the *Teleworking Agreement* in conjunction with their supervisor;
- Adhere to the terms and conditions of the *Teleworking Agreement*;
- Establish a dedicated, safe home or alternative worksite/office consistent with the requirements of this procedure;
- Establish work practices to ensure a successful teleworking experience;
- Report to Department work sites for meetings, training, etc. as required by the employee's supervisor, reviewing manager, or other Division/Department representative;
- Safeguard any proprietary or confidential Departmental information;
- Determine any federal, state, or local tax implications resulting from working at home and satisfy any personal tax obligations; and,
- Comply with all other terms and conditions of employment.

Supervisors shall:

- Objectively consider employee's telework requests within the provisions of this procedure and other Division guidelines;
- Become familiar with the provisions of this procedure, the *Teleworking Agreement*, and other Division guidelines;
- Decide whether a telework arrangement is beneficial to the Department and employee;
- If the request is approved:
 - Complete the *Teleworking Agreement* in conjunction with the employee;
 - Provide the employee with a copy of the signed *Teleworking Agreement*; and
 - Ensure that the employee fully understands his or her responsibilities;
- If the request is disapproved, provide a written explanation to the employee outlining the reason(s) for the decision;

- Revise the *Teleworking Agreement* if any portion of the arrangement covered by the agreement changes;
- Maintain an inventory of Department-owned equipment in the employee's home or alternative worksite;
- Continue normal supervisory activities including feedback and performance evaluations;
- Prepare an amendment to the employee's Performance Plan, specifically detailing responsibility areas and standards of performance pertaining to the terms of the *Teleworking Agreement*; and,
- As necessary, perform site visit(s) to ensure compliance with telework program requirements.

Reviewing Managers shall:

- Review telework proposals submitted by subordinate supervisors who believe that the duties and responsibilities of a position can be more efficiently and effectively performed by a teleworking employee;
- Become familiar with the provisions of this procedure, the *Teleworking Agreement*, and other Division guidelines;
- In these instances, determine whether the recommended position is suitable for full-time teleworking;
- Include the following statement in the Performance Management Plan of supervisors with teleworking employees: This employee is a supervisor of a Teleworker(s). The supervisor must ensure the employee's compliance with the provisions of HR SOP #302, *Telework* and to the signed *Teleworking Agreement* (Attachment 1); and
- As determined by the Division Director, may be required to review and approve all teleworking agreements proposed by employees.

Division Directors (or designees) shall:

- Determine which employees and/or jobs are appropriate for teleworking, and the level of supervision authorized to approve individual teleworking arrangements; and
- Be responsible for the effective and proper management of the teleworking program in his or her respective Division.

Georgia Commute Options:

DNR complies with the Governor's Executive Order by using Georgia Commute Options flextime programs to enhance the productivity and efficiency of DNR employees while improving road conditions and the flow of workers and goods for the private sector. For more information on Georgia Commute Options, go to <http://dnrintranet.org/hr/commute-smart>.

Georgia Commute Options promotes teleworking, alternative work schedules, and alternatives to driving alone and offers incentives to Metro Atlanta commuters to reduce traffic and improve air quality. To be eligible for incentives, commuters must live or work in the following

counties: Barrow, Bartow, Carroll, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Newton, Paulding, Rockdale, Spalding, and Walton. More information on these incentives is available at: <http://gacommuteoptions.com/Save-Your-Commute/Earn-Cash.-Win-Prizes>.

Retention:

Retain the original, signed *Teleworking Agreement* in the local management file for a period of one year after the telework arrangement ends.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 - *Teleworking Agreement*