



Telework Guidelines & Procedures

County of Riverside Human Resources Department Telework Guidelines & Procedure

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Purpose & Introduction

Teleworking is an alternative work arrangement that may be used to:

- reduce employee commute trips and traffic congestion,
- reduce parking requirements and office space needs,
- help attract and retain a diverse and talented work force,
- accommodate special needs of employees,
- increase employee motivation, and
- increase productivity.

Teleworking is one of several alternatives, such as flexible work schedules and compressed workweeks that allow work arrangements to be tailored to the individual needs of the employee and to the unique requirements of each work situation with benefits accruing to the employee and the organization.

Riverside County supports Teleworking, one or more days a week, as an alternative work arrangement and encourages supervisors to give Teleworking every consideration. Riverside County encourages the use of Teleworking in situations where it will work to the mutual benefit of all stakeholders.

Note: This guideline does not interfere with or apply to situations in which supervisors allow employees to occasionally work at home.

Requirements for all Teleworking arrangements are set forth in this guideline, and comply with Board of Supervisors' Policy K3. These requirements are intended to ensure Riverside County complies with all applicable laws, and to reduce exposure to financial liabilities. Aside from these requirements, and with the understanding that careful consideration must be given to the issues presented in this guideline, the intent is to allow individuals and their leadership to design their own Teleworking arrangements.

The Riverside County Teleworking Program is based on these principles:

1. Teleworking is an alternative work arrangement, not a universal benefit.
2. Teleworking is voluntary and based on mutual trust.
3. Teleworking benefits the County, the community, and the t.
4. Teleworking work arrangements are mutually agreed to by the teleworker, supervisor and department head.
5. The financial welfare of both Riverside County and the teleworker and the economic realities of Riverside County must be considered in the Teleworking agreement.
6. Teleworking must remain a mutual benefit to all stakeholders.

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7. Teleworking requires training and planning.

Program Description

Teleworking is an alternative work location mutually agreed upon by the teleworker and the supervisor, subject to the approval of the department head and appointing authority. Teleworking arrangements are voluntary. The department, the supervisor, or the employee may terminate a Teleworking arrangement at any time, for any reason, and return to full-time in-office work.

Teleworking is not an employee benefit but an alternative method of meeting the needs of the County. Since Teleworking is a privilege, the County has the right to refuse to make Teleworking available to an employee and to terminate the arrangement at any time. Teleworking and issues surrounding it are not grievable.

Employees are not required to telework. Employees have the right to refuse to telework if the option is made available to them. Employees who choose to telework have the right to cease Teleworking and to return to their former in-office work pattern at any time.

This guideline is not a contract of employment and nothing in it should be construed as creating a contract of employment between Riverside County and any employee. Riverside County reserves the right to terminate this program at its discretion.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of Employees

Teleworking employees are responsible to:

1. Become familiar with BOS Policy K-3, this guideline for Teleworking, the Teleworking Agreement and related documents.
2. Complete and sign the Teleworking Agreement.
3. Abide by the terms and conditions of the Teleworking Agreement.
4. Set up a dedicated home work area that is safe for the employee and others entering it.
5. Establish work practices that make the teleworker arrangement transparent to customers, ensuring they are not inconvenienced in their dealing with the employee or Riverside County.
6. Report to customer and County work locations, as required, for meeting, training, etc., on request of supervisor or customers.
8. Safeguard proprietary information (regardless of form) as specified by County security instructions.

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9. Determine federal, state and local tax implications resulting from working at home and satisfy their personal tax obligations.
10. Comply with applicable state and local zoning ordinances.
11. Comply with all other terms and conditions of employment.

Responsibilities of Supervisors

Supervisors are responsible to:

1. Become familiar with BOS Policy K-3, this guideline for Teleworking, the Teleworking Agreement and related documents.
2. Consider employee requests to work at home that benefit the teleworker and do not adversely affect County interests.
3. Decide whether a teleworker arrangement is beneficial to employee and the County.
4. File original signed Teleworking Agreement in the employee personnel files kept by the department and retain for one year after teleworker arrangement ends.
5. Give and explain to employee a copy of Teleworking Agreement.
6. Update Teleworking Agreement if any aspect of the arrangement covered by the agreement changes.
7. Review County security instructions for computer security and safeguarding proprietary information with employee.
8. Maintain inventory of County-owned equipment in employee's home.
9. Continue normal supervisory activities including career development, ongoing feedback and performance appraisals.

Responsibilities of Personnel Department

The Personnel Department is responsible to:

1. Assist and encourage employees/supervisors/managers wishing to implement Teleworking arrangements.
2. Answer questions about Teleworking and help resolve difficulties impeding implementation.
3. Provide and/or coordinate training for Teleworking participants (teleworkers, supervisors, and management).

Responsibilities of Management

Management is responsible to:

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1. Seriously consider Teleworking alternatives as a staffing strategy.
2. Encourage Teleworking trials.
3. Recognize supervisors successfully using Teleworking as alternative work arrangements.

Responsibilities of Teleworking Committee

The Teleworking Committee is responsible to:

1. Encourage and promote Teleworking as a viable and valuable program.
2. Prepare, maintain, and update Teleworking Guideline and Teleworking Agreement.
3. Serve as a resource on Teleworking for managers, supervisors, and employees.
4. Monitor and evaluate Teleworking program; making recommendations for needed modifications.
5. Serve as a problem solving mediator for issues that cannot be resolved between the Teleworking or potentially Teleworking employee and the supervisor.

Teleworking Agreements

Employees wishing to telework must complete a checklist and sign the “**Teleworking Agreement**” regarding the employee’s work arrangements away from the regular office. The number of days an employee may telework is at the discretion of their supervisor or manager and must receive approval from the department head. The supervisor or manager may limit Teleworking further, if they feel it is necessary. The employees’ supervisor and department head must also sign the written agreement and Teleworking arrangement checklist.

Riverside County shall select positions and employees for Teleworking. A **Teleworking Work Plan** should also be included as part of the Teleworking Agreement. The Work Plan should include at a minimum:

1. Specific description of the duties to be performed
2. Established workdays and normal work hours, not to exceed three days per week
3. Explanation as to how supervision will be provided
4. Explanation as to how work products and outputs will be monitored and reviewed
5. Explanation as to how attendance and leave records will be maintained and processed

Program Participation

Program participation is defined in the Board of Supervisors Policy K-3, “Participation in the program is solely a management prerogative, not an employee right. Employees who wish to participate in the home Teleworking program will complete and submit a “**Request to Home**

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Telework” form (Attachment A) to their supervisor/manager. Participants may be selected by the department head or designee.”

Criteria for Employee Participation

County employees are eligible to apply to become teleworkers if they meet the Board of Supervisors Policy K-3 criteria:

1. Employed with the county at least one year and/or past a probationary period.
2. Work assignments or job duties that allow the employee to be away from the office.
3. Has department approval to take part in the program.

If the employee and his/her position qualify for Teleworking, he/she may be considered for Teleworking and are subject to the same rules and procedures as other employees. Teleworking will not adversely affect an employee’s eligibility for advancement or any other employee right or benefit.

Participation in the Teleworking program is voluntary. Criteria for participation include the adaptability of the job for Teleworking, aptitude of the employee for Teleworking and approval by the supervisor/department head. Riverside County shall determine who is most qualified for Teleworking. This determination will focus on performance characteristics and job characteristics.

Performance Characteristics

The following performance characteristics are usually associated with successful teleworkers; and should be considered before entering into a Teleworking agreement.

1. Self-motivated.
2. Demonstrated conscientiousness about work time and productivity evidenced by satisfactory or better performance reviews.
3. Ability to work alone effectively, for extended periods.
4. Completes assignments independently and on time, meeting standards for quality.
5. Asks for assistance when needed.
6. Limited need for feedback but able to ask for it if necessary.
7. Communicates information fully and timely with leadership, coworkers, support staff, and customers.
8. Sets appropriate priorities, changes priorities as needed, and maintains a suitable work pace.

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9. Demonstrates dependability and responsibility in meeting attendance standards, following through on projects and work assignments and maintaining confidentiality of County information.
10. Operates and adjusts computer or other equipment independently, to the degree that will be required at the alternate work place.

Job Characteristics

A job that is appropriate for Teleworking arrangements typically has the following characteristics.

1. Face-to-face interactions are minimal or can be scheduled.
2. Needs of internal and external customers can be satisfied from the alternate work place.
3. The need for specialized equipment must be minimal or flexible.
4. Ability to schedule work flow and allow work that can be done only at the main office to be completed on non-Teleworking days.
5. Clear objective can be set, and tasks can be clearly defined.
6. Job contains tasks that can best be completed during quiet uninterrupted time.

Prerequisites Necessary to Qualify for Teleworking Program

1. Employee must sign and abide by Teleworking Agreement.
2. Supervisor, Manager, Department Head and/or Appointing Authority approval required.
3. Both the supervisor and the employee must participate in all training and evaluation efforts associated with the Teleworking Program.
4. The employee must make and maintain dependent care arrangements to permit concentration on work assignments at home.
5. Supervisor's willingness to invest the necessary time to help the Teleworking arrangement succeeds.
6. Planning with co-workers how workflow issues will be addressed while Teleworking such as callers, mail, and meetings.
7. Employee must identify a specific workstation within their home or satellite office, as defined in the **Work Space Safety and Ergonomics** section of this document.

Work Performance

The performance standards for employees working at the alternate work places should be equivalent to the standards used when the employees are working at the regular office. Nothing in the Teleworking Guideline waives or changes standards of performance or behavior in the workplace.

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Communication

The teleworker is primarily responsible for maintaining effective communication and workflow among customers, co-workers, and supervisor. The supervisor will devise procedures for effective communication. Communication should allow Teleworking to appear invisible to outside customers.

Teleworkers must keep their supervisor informed of progress on assignments worked on at the alternative work site, including any problems which they may experience while Teleworking.

Methods of planning and monitoring the work of the teleworker may include:

1. E-mail to supervisor outlining Teleworking day's work plan the day before Teleworking followed by a list of accomplishments the day after the teleworker day.
2. Discussing plans for work for the Teleworking day(s) with supervisor, the debriefing the following day.
3. Scheduled telephone "meetings" with the supervisor on the Teleworking day.
4. Follow any guidelines set by the department for office communications, such as making regular calls to the office voice mail system to check and respond to messages.
5. Some other arrangement specifically for the Teleworking day designed at the beginning of the program.

Training

Prospective teleworkers and their supervisors must participate in a training program before beginning to telework. The training will include Teleworking policies, guidelines, alternative work place safety, work performance evaluation, designing Teleworking assignments, and tips & guidelines for successful Teleworking. The objective is to ensure continued high quality of customer service and to avoid transferring work to coworkers, as well as other considerations for successful Teleworking.

Compensation, Benefits, and Taxes

Compensation and benefits are not affected by Teleworking.

Teleworking employees are responsible to determine any federal, state and local tax implications resulting from working at home and to satisfy their personal tax obligations. Employees should refer questions to their personal tax advisor.

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Worker's Compensation

The employee will be covered by worker's compensation laws and procedures for work-related injuries while Teleworking at the alternative work location in the designated workspace during designated working hours. Since the workspace and the home will be one and the same, worker's compensation will not apply to non-job related injuries that might occur in the home. The County's liability for injuries taking place while working at home will be confined to the designated workspace area only. The County's liability will also be confined to injuries taking place during the work hours agreed upon by the employee and their supervisor.

The County is not liable for any injuries to family members, visitors and others in the employee's home.

Teleworking employees should consider carrying insurance that covers third-party injuries arising out of or relating to the use of the home under a Teleworking policy and should consult their personal insurance carries for advice.

Teleworkers shall verify in writing that their home office provides work space that is free of safety and fire hazards and shall agree that Riverside County will be held harmless against any and all claims, excluding worker's compensation claims that result from working at the home office.

Meetings should be scheduled and conducted on non-telework days. No employee engaged in Teleworking will be allowed to conduct face-to-face business with a third party at their home office. If there is a business need to conduct a meeting within the home, meetings may only include approved Human Resource Employees, and must have prior approval from the supervisor/manager.

Travel Accidents

The employee is covered by the same travel/accident provisions as at the regular work place when traveling for authorized, job-related purposes on the day the employee is working away from the regular office. The employee is not covered by travel accidents when commuting to and from work on days the employee is working in the regular office or for accidents that may occur when the employee is not on authorized, job-related business.

Work Space Safety and Ergonomics

In order for Teleworking to be successful and cost-effective, the employee is responsible for establishing and maintaining safe and healthful working conditions in the alternative workspace. The employee is responsible for avoiding work that is not normally part of the job when working at

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the alternative work place (such as heavy lifting) and for taking normal precautions to avoid accidents.

Work Space

When working at home, the teleworker is responsible for establishing and maintaining an adequate workspace and for providing a work environment free of interruptions and distractions that would affect performance. It must be a clean, safe, dedicated workspace. The employee must make arrangements with other individuals in the household to establish a good working environment. The employee is responsible for providing adequate care for dependents while the employee is working.

A teleworker may be required to share space on days when working in the regular office. Coordination of the shared space may be required.

Work Place Inspection

The teleworker must allow an authorized County representative to inspect the alternate work place to ensure adequate health and safety (ergonomic) conditions, and to inspect County-owned equipment. Twenty-four hours notice will be given.

Hours of Work

Employees will work their scheduled hours as specified in the Teleworking Agreement. Any changes must be communicated to and approved by the employee's supervisor. The teleworker must submit time sheets, leave requests, etc. just as the employee would do at the regular work location.

The overtime policy extends to Teleworking arrangements. Employees not exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act must receive compensation for overtime that has been planned, scheduled and authorized in advance by their supervisor. Travel time between an employee's home and regular work location is not compensable, even when the employee reports to the regular location on a day scheduled for Teleworking.

Teleworkers, dependent on the computer to perform work assignments, will address computer downtime issues and procedures in the Teleworking Agreement.

Dependent Care

Teleworking is not a substitute for child care. Per Board of Supervisors Policy K-3, "Employees may not provide primary care for children [less than] 12 years of age when they are working at

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home. Employees with children under age 12 may work at home only if someone else will provide primary care for the child during work hours. Employees may not care for elderly adults who would otherwise need care while working at home.” teleworkers must make or maintain dependent care arrangements to permit concentration on work assignments at home.

Expenses

Reimbursable

Riverside County will reimburse the employee for job related telephone expenses incurred by the employee at home. The employee must present an itemized copy of the telephone bill to the supervisor for approval to reimburse.

The Teleworking Agreement specifies the other business expenses for which the supervisor has authorized reimbursement (e.g. basic office supplies such as paper, pens, fax and computer paper). To be reimbursed for other business expenses that may arise, the employee should seek supervisor approval before incurring them. Office supplies will be provided by the County as needed. Employee’s out-of-pocket expenses for other supplies will not be reimbursed unless by prior approval of the employee’s supervisor.

Non-reimbursable

Any costs related to remodeling and furnishing the home work space.

Commuting expense between Teleworking work location and regular work location.

Household expenses (e.g., heating, air conditioning and electricity).

Equipment

Equipment includes computers hardware and software, faxes, modems, telephones, etc.

When the equipment needed for Teleworking is not generally available for individual consumer purchase or the equipment is proprietary to the County, the equipment will be provided by the County.

When the equipment needed for Teleworking is generally available for individual consumer purchases the employee will generally be required to supply their own equipment for the alternative work site. In some instances, where funds are available, the County may provide equipment.

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Telework employees will receive a County mobile device for telephone calls. Business related calls should be completed with the County mobile/cellular phone.

Information Security

Regardless of whether teleworkers use either County-provided equipment or their own computer equipment to perform their jobs from home they must abide by County policies covering computer equipment and information security.

County information should be removed from the main office only on a “need to know” basis, and only with supervisory approval. These materials should be secured from non employees when not actually in use, and returned as soon as possible. The supervisor will review computer security instructions before the start of a Teleworking arrangement. They must review the information protection safeguards the employee will implement to protect the equipment and any information stored in it or kept at home. They should also verify that the system will have (and use!) an anti-virus software program to protect the equipment used in the home.

County information and equipment must be protected to approximately the same degree that it would be in the main office. Files and documents should be locked when not in use and County-owned equipment should not be used by anyone other than the Teleworking employee.

County-Provided Equipment

An employee’s supervisor is responsible for determining whether to authorize County-provided equipment for use in an employee’s home. If County-provided equipment is used:

- All maintenance will be performed by an authorized person, at County expense. The employee may be responsible for transporting the equipment to the County specified location or an authorized HR person may visit the alternate worksite; 24-hour notice will be provided.
- The County will provide a mobile/cellular phone device for County-related telephone calls.
- Surge protectors must be used with any County-owned computer made available to the teleworker.
- The County will repair or replace lost, damaged, or stolen equipment provided the employee has taken appropriate precautions to safeguard the equipment.
- Employees may use County-provided equipment for personal use but may not allow non-County employees to use it. Personal data should not be stored on the County-owned equipment.
- County-owned software may not be duplicated except as formally authorized.
- No employee-owned software may be loaded on a County-owned computer.

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- Employees must return equipment to the County when requested by management or when employment is terminated.
- The employee will be liable for any intentional damage to the equipment. Employee will also be liable for any damage resulting from gross negligence by the employee or any member of the employee's family or household. The employee will also be liable for damage resulting from a power surge if not surge protector is used.

Employee-Owned Equipment

If employee-owned equipment is used:

- The employee retains all responsibility for the maintenance, insurance, repair and other costs of the equipment.
- County files and information should be kept in separate directories, or separate removable media, and clearly noted as County or personal.
- Software which is not owned or licensed by the employee or the County may not run if County data resides on the computer or the computer accesses a County network.
- All County information and network connections must be secured when not in use.