

TELECOMMUTING
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

TELECOMMUTING POLICY

The County of San Mateo is adopting the following policy to govern telecommuting activity within the County.

1. **Program Eligibility:** The Telecommuting Program allows the telecommuting employee to work at a site other than a County office. This is a privilege, not a right. An employee is eligible to participate in telecommuting by: a) completing an application requesting consideration for telecommuting, b) receiving management authorization to telecommute, c) participating in a supervisor-telecommuter training session and d) developing a written telecommuting contract accordance with County policy. Telecommuting may be terminated at the request of either the telecommuter or management.
2. **Review Process:** All denied applications for the telecommuting program will be reviewed by the Employee and Public Services Director and the County Manager, whose decision will be final. Employees terminating from the Telecommuting Program who wish to have their termination reviewed by the Employee and Public Services Director and the County Manager should contact the Benefits Manager. The Telecommuting Committee may also examine all approvals and denials.
3. **Informational Training and Communication:** The County will offer periodic educational sessions to communicate the Telecommuting Program to telecommuters. For those telecommuters who are approved to participate in the program a telecommuter/supervisor training session will be offered before telecommuting begins.
4. **Working Hours:** Work hours, compensation and vacation schedules will conform to the Ordinance Code, to MOU provisions, Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) provisions, and to terms otherwise agreed upon by the telecommuter and the supervisor. The telecommuter will spend at least one regular work day per week in the office. No worker shall work more hours than his/her normal work week as a result of telecommuting unless s/he has received prior overtime authorization, and is compensated for that overtime.
5. **Telecommuting Communication:** Telecommuters will have a method of receiving and responding to communications (i.e. messages, mail, public bulletins, training opportunities, etc.) from their County supervisors or managers. This method should be incorporated in the agreement between the supervisor and the telecommuter.

6. **Measurement of Work Activity:** Each telecommuter will agree with his/her supervisor/manager on the objective(s) or work assignment(s) to be accomplished during the telecommuting period. The agreement will also include the method(s) of productivity measurement established between the telecommuter and the supervisor/manager. The telecommuting program is not intended to extract more work from employees nor to encourage employees to work uncompensated hours.
7. **On Site Visits to the Work Area:** Given a minimum of 24 hours advance notice, an appropriate representative from the County, trained for the purpose of the visit, may make on-site visits to the telecommuter's worksite, including residence. The purpose of the visit would be to determine that the worksite is safe and free from hazards and, where appropriate, to maintain, repair, inspect or retrieve County-owned equipment, software, data and supplies.
8. **Overall Obligation:** Telecommuters remain obligated to comply with County rules, policies, practices, and instructions. Telecommuters are responsible for clarifying any questions regarding the applicability of rules, policies, practices and instructions through discussions with their supervisor.

TELECOMMUTING PROCEDURES

1. **Implementation:** Before the telecommuting program can begin both the participant and the supervisor/manager must participate in training. The training is designed to survey and identify:
 - job responsibilities and physical arrangements necessary to support telecommuting;
 - supervision and how performance will be measured;
 - training in new procedures or proper use of new tools that may be required to complete the objective of telecommuting.
2. **Participation in Telecommuting Studies:** Telecommuters and their supervisors/manager will participate in all studies, inquires, reports and analyses relating to telecommuting for the County. The telecommuter's individual responses will remain anonymous, unless authorized for release. Otherwise, aggregate telecommuter responses may be compiled and made available to the public, without identification of the study-participants. Non-telecommuters may be periodically surveyed to identify any adverse impact resulting from telecommuters. All studies shall be made available to the telecommuting committee.
3. **Employee Benefits:** All existing benefits for telecommuters will remain the same as for employees at County sites. A telecommuter is covered by Workers' Compensation whether working at home or for work-related travel.

Requests to use sick leave, vacation or other leave must be approved by the telecommuter's supervisor/manager in the same manner as the employee who does not telecommute. If a telecommuter becomes ill while working at an alternate work location, s/he must report the hours actually worked and use sick leave for those hours not worked.

4. **Clerical Support:** The need for clerical support will be identified and the agreement between the supervisor and telecommuter will include how clerical support will be handled.
5. **Training:** All requests for training, other than telecommuting training, and all other activities will still be handled in accordance with County policy.
6. **Program Equipment and Supplies:** The equipment and supplies necessary to telecommute will be provided by either the telecommuter, the County, or a combination of both telecommuter and County. Any available discounts for purchase of hardware, software, or equipment to be used to complete assigned work will be made available to the telecommuter. County assigned equipment and supplies shall not be loaned by the telecommuter to anyone except when so directed by his/her supervisor and all equipment will be used for County purposes only. The telecommuter and supervisor are responsible for including a plan to safeguard confidentiality of work as part of the overall agreement.

Equipment: Participants that are assigned County-owned hardware and software will provide written acceptance before being given custody of the items.

The responsible supervisor/manager and telecommuter, along with the help of a representative from Information Services, if necessary, will define what tools are needed beyond what is available.

Supplies: Materials needed to support the telecommuting effort will be provided by the Department. All requests must be approved by the responsible supervisor/manager and submitted to the Department Head for approval.

7. **Software and Required Hardware Modifications:** The cost of software and hardware modifications may be paid by the Department. The supervisor/manager, after consulting with Information Services, will obtain the necessary equipment.

Ownership of the software and all files and databases shall remain the property of the County. All software copyright laws will be strictly adhered to; in no instances will unauthorized copies be made of County-owned software.

8. **Repairs to Equipment:** The cost of repairs for telecommuter owned equipment will, in most cases, be paid for by the telecommuter. When County equipment is provided to the telecommuter, it is his/her responsibility to assure that the

equipment is used properly. Repair costs for equipment owned by the County will be paid for by the County.

- Upon determining that there is a problem with the county-owned hardware, the employee should notify their departmental information system personnel or Information Services as soon as practical and apprise them of the problem. It will be the department's responsibility to repair or replace any items identified.
 - If there is a delay in the repair or replacement of the equipment or any other circumstance under which it would be impossible for the telecommuter to work off-site, then s/he will be reassigned to a County facility until the repair has been made or the circumstance has been corrected.
9. **Designated Work Space:** The telecommuter should designate a work space, at the off-site work area, for installation of any equipment to be used while telecommuting. This work space should be maintained in a safe condition, free from hazards to people and equipment, and should comply with County VDT standards. The County Safety Officer will provide guidelines for VDT and ergonomic standards and will visit as many homesites as possible to provide assistance to telecommuters with complying with these standards. A priority will be given to continuous VDT operators.
10. **Costs Directly Attributed to Telecommuting:** Costs incurred as the direct result of telecommuting, such as local and long distance County calls, the costs of a direct line for a computer modem, will be paid by the Department. The telecommuter may obtain a County telephone credit card which may be used for County business only. The department and telecommuter should work together to minimize the direct costs attributed to telecommuting.