

## Alternate Work Arrangements (Remote/Telework & Flexible Work Week)

**Category:** COVID-19 Emergency Management

### Policy Statement

The City of Toronto is working closely with Toronto Public Health and the Provincial Government to monitor and assess potential health risks associated with the pandemic.

In this regard, alternate work arrangements have been developed in order to assist employees while contributing to the continuation of City services from remote locations.

### Eligibility

Employees in positions that have been identified by their Division as being suitable for alternate work arrangements.

### Application

During a pandemic, there may be various reasons an employee's ability to attend work is impacted, including:

- recent travel to affected areas
- personal illness
- disability (compromised immunity)
- child care (daycare/school closures)
- eldercare
- ill dependents and
- directed to do so in order to meet the objective of physical distancing

As an employer, the City encourages employees in positions that are suitable, to work remotely to ensure the continuation of City services to:

- adhere to Public Health direction and
- meet the objective of physical distancing

### Definitions

**Remote (Telework)** refers to the delivery of services by employees working remotely, utilizing some if not all City-owned equipment and technology.

**Flexible Work Week** Provides full-time employees with the ability to have flexible start and end times while continuing to work the required number of hours each day.

### Conditions

**Remote (Telework)** Divisions should identify those positions that support their business continuity planning and are suitable for working remotely.

Several arrangements must be made by the City and the employee before working remotely can begin, such as ensuring adequate technology along with health and safety considerations (Appendix A).

Employees working remotely should be accessible via email and telephone. Employees will also be responsible for maintaining effective communications and work flow with their clients, co-workers and leaders during their scheduled work hours. Virtual meetings such as conference calls should be utilized where appropriate.

**Flexible Work Week** Divisions should identify those positions that support their business continuity planning and are suitable for a flexible work week.

To minimize exposure in the workplace, the following flexible work week arrangements should be considered:

- working alternate hours (for example 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. instead of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.)
- working staggered hours (for example employees begin and end their work day at different times i.e. some employees begin at 9 a.m. while others begin at 11 a.m.)
- working a compressed work week (for example a full time employee scheduled for 40 hours per week could work four 10 hour days instead of five 8 hour days)

This policy is based on the assumption that employees are completing their regular weekly work hours and focuses on overtime/differences from regularly scheduled hours.

There is information available to assist teleworking staff on the [COVID-19 Information & Resources for Employees page on ELI](#), check often for updates.

Leaders and employees who require support related to remote or alternative work arrangements may contact [covid19staffsupport@toronto.ca](mailto:covid19staffsupport@toronto.ca)

As this is an evolving situation this policy will be updated as the situation changes.

## **Appendix A**

### **Remote (Telework) Safety**

The information that follows is intended to assist those working remotely in identifying practices that will enable their work to be performed in a healthy, safe, and comfortable environment.

### **Workspace Condition**

- There is adequate space to work effectively.
- Workspace is organized and free of clutter.
- Workspace and furniture are arranged to support neutral postures to minimize the risks of musculoskeletal disorder injuries.
- Floor surfaces are free of slip, trip or fall hazards (e.g. loose tiles or carpets).
- Aisles, walkways, exits and stairs are clear and unobstructed.

### **Lighting**

- Work areas are adequately illuminated.
- Light fixtures are in good condition.

### **Electrical**

- Electrical equipment is free from hazards (e.g. frayed or exposed wires, bare conductors, loose wires).
- Phone lines, electrical cords, and extension wires are properly secured, out of the way, and anchored, when possible, but not kept under rugs/carpets.
- Power bars are used in place of extension cords, where possible, and any extension cords are CSA-approved and grounded by three prongs.
- Adequate outlets are available (i.e. outlets are not overloaded).
- Heat-generating equipment is clear of debris and combustible material.
- There is adequate ventilation room around all electrical equipment.

### **Emergency Systems**

- Personal first aid materials are readily available. Smoke detector(s) are present, fully functional, routinely tested and, if battery-powered, the batteries are changed at least every six months.
- A carbon monoxide detector is present and fully functional, if required (i.e. fuel-burning appliance, fireplace or attached storage garage in residential building).

Additional information, including a Workstation Adjustment Checklist and Guidelines, can be found on the [Ergonomics webpage](#) on the City's intranet.