

LE SUEUR COUNTY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Title: Remote Work Policy and Procedure
Date: July 2020
Le Sueur County recognizes that in the event that a leave of absence of one of its' employees places the county in a work shortage unable to be adequately filled, that this creates the need to provide options to the normal work environment that utilize technology to continue work flow and productivity in an efficient manner. To accomplish this, the County supports remote works an alternative work arrangement for County employees. The County's remote work program is intended to be an innovative option that benefits the County, its citizens and employees.
Attachments: 1. Remote Work Agreement

I. Definitions:

- A. Telecommuting: To work part or all of the standard workweek at an alternate site on a time limited, scheduled basis.
- B. Eligible Employees: Regular full-time or regular part time employees who have been approved for remote work by their immediate Supervisor and/or Department Head and the County Board.
- C. Remote work Agreement: A document that describes a specific alternative work site arrangement agreed to between the employee, the Supervisor and/or the Department Head.
- D. Core hours: Those work hours during which the employee must be available for contact by the employer and/or customer.

II. Purpose:

This policy will define the Le Sueur County remote work program, the guidelines and rules under which it will operate. It is intended to provide a general framework for county departments. Remote work in all Le Sueur County departments are expected to comply with the following policy. Le Sueur County understands that special conditions or needs may exist that require additional policy at the departmental level.

III. Policies:

Authority

The Le Sueur County Board has sole authority to establish a remote work program and its policies. The Board must approve all policy changes.

Remote Access

Arrangements for remote access will be subject to review and approval of the Information Technology (IT) Department Head (or their official designee) to assure the security and the integrity of the Le Sueur County computer network.

Employee Selection and Eligibility:

Employee participation in remote work from home is strictly voluntary. Employee remote work from alternative work sites is not necessarily voluntary, as it may be directly related to agency business functions and a necessity for effective delivery of services to citizens. All forms of remote work imply an employer-employee relationship with the employee receiving the same benefits as if they were not telecommuting. The employer has sole authority to determine who is appropriate for the remote work option. Seniority will not be the determining factor. When determining whether remote works an appropriate alternative, the following factors are desirable and should be considered:

IV. Job Characteristics:

Most of the job tasks do not require frequent direct contact with other employees.

There are clearly defined tasks and deliverables.

There are measurable work activities that can be monitored.

There are established time frames and work points to achieve objectives and measure progress.

Many of the job tasks require concentration in a quiet setting

The job can be performed without close supervision.

The job does not require access to special equipment only available at the regular work site.

Most communication in this position can be accomplished using technology rather than face-to-face contact.

V. Employee Characteristics:

Regular full-time or regular part-time employment status, not probationary, unless due to a promotion

Proven ability to perform and a high knowledge of the job

Ability to work independently and efficiently

Self-motivated and self-disciplined

Has a strong desire to make remote work successful

- Above average work skills such as good planning, efficient time management, high level communication skills, ability to meet clear standards and objectives, comfort in working alone

Must have a home environment conducive to a proper work atmosphere if working from home

Can develop a protection process to maintain confidentiality and privacy at the Remote Worker site

Ability to troubleshoot and repair computer system problems of moderate complexity

VI. Managing Supervisor Characteristics:

An open and positive attitude towards telecommuting

A mutual trust and respect with the Remote Worker

Good organizational and planning skills

An ability to establish clear objectives and measurements of the job tasks

Provides regular feedback, support and supervision

Ability to keep an open channel of communication

Use of innovative and flexible approaches to supervision of employees

Can appropriately discipline an employee who fails to comply with all remote work policies, procedures and requirements

Can measure the Remote Worker's performance by evaluating their outcomes

VII. OFFICE SETUP:

1. Hardware:

Hardware will be furnished by the County and will be in accordance with the remote work agreement.

The employee is responsible for their equipment and must take precautions to insure all equipment integrity.

If equipment malfunctions occur and work at home cannot be performed, other assignments will be given and the employee may be required to return to their regular office location.

2. Software:

The County will provide all software, Windows XP or greater.

The employee may not duplicate County software for personal use.

No software may be run that is not approved by the IT Department that may affect the County's internal computer system.

The County will furnish up-to-date anti-virus software.

The employee will have internet connection.

3. Copyright / Intellectual Property:

The use of data provided by the county, at the remote site, is limited to authorized persons and for purposes related only to business for the county.

All written documents and other materials designed or developed by the employee on county time are considered the property of the county, whether it is on a county site or not.

4. Furnishings / Ergonomics:

The employee is responsible for all costs of maintaining a home office, including: electricity, heating, property taxes, insurance and all other costs relating to the use of a home office.

The employee must ensure that furnishings and design in a home office is ergonomically correct.

5. Certification of Designated Workplace:

The Remote Worker is responsible for establishing and maintaining adequate workspace at the home location.

Office area must be in an area free from distractions and separate from the common living area.

The workspace must accommodate equipment needed for work while telecommuting.

The space must be maintained in a safe condition, free from hazards and other dangers to the employee and to county property.

On-site inspections may be conducted by the county's staff to determine whether all criteria have been met to fully integrate the workspace into an extension of the county.

County personnel may inspect the remote work worksite at any time during core work hours unless the employee has notified the agency that leave time is being taken.

If the employee refuses to consent to the inspections the remote work agreement may be terminated.

VIII. Downtime:

The Remote Worker must inform his or her supervisor of equipment failure immediately.

The supervisor may require the employee to come in and continue working or be assigned other duties until necessary repairs are made.

Repeated circumstances of equipment failure may be cause for termination of the remote work agreement.

IX. Work Schedule:

The work schedule of the Remote Worker will be determined by the supervisor and made part of the Remote Work Agreement.

Core hours will be established during which the employee must be available for contact.

The employee will be expected to attend all assigned office meetings related to the performance of their job, including meetings held on a remote workday.

Remote Workers must notify their office if they leave their remote work location during established core hours.

Work hours, overtime compensation and vacation schedules will conform to County policy and to terms otherwise agreed upon by employee/supervisor.

If a Remote Worker is sick during remote workhours, the Remote Worker must report those hours worked and use sick leave, vacation or personal leave for hours not worked.

The supervisor shall require the employee to provide documentation concerning arrangements for dependent care during scheduled work hours.

Remote works not a substitute for dependent care.

If a Remote Worker is found to be unavailable during scheduled hours the Remote Work Agreement may be terminated.

X. Supplies / Inventory Management / Expenses:

The Remote Worker may not purchase or incur expenses unless pre-authorized by the supervisor.

Mileage to and from the employee's assigned office or home is not subject to reimbursement even if the employee is required to be in the office on a Remote Worker day.

The Remote Worker agrees that all county-owned property will be returned to the county at the county's request.

When the remote work agreement is terminated for any reason all county-owned property or supplies must be returned and inventory taken to ensure everything is returned and in good repair.

The IT department staff will not be available to respond computer problems after the normal work hours.

XI. Taxes and Liability:

Tax implications, local ordinance and zoning issues related to the home workspace shall be the responsibility of the Remote Worker.

An employee remains liable for injuries to third persons and/or members of their family on the employee's premises, including employee's remote workspace.

An employee is covered by the County Worker's Compensations laws while in remote work status and conducting county business. Any work injury that occurs must be reported to the supervisor immediately, using the county's standard injury reporting process.

The employee's home is considered a work site only during scheduled working hours for purposes of Worker's Compensation.

The county does not assume any liability for loss, damage or wear of employees owned equipment, furniture, etc. including: normal wear on home furnishings, any damage resulting from the installation of additional telephone lines, as well as any accidental damages due to the failure of the County equipment.

XII. Home Office Visit:

No County or work related meetings should be held at the remote worksite without prior approval by the employee's supervisor.

XIII. Data Security:

All county data and completed work must be backed up on a regular basis and stored separately.

The Remote Worker and supervisor should discuss the type and form of data which will be taken to and from the alternate work site and agree on the security and transfer process necessary to meet the needs of their division. May require a fireproof/locked storage.

Remote Workers must provide reasonable security of data and information they carry to and from their office site.

Disclosure of private or confidential data related to remote works grounds for terminating the Remote Work Agreement as well as other disciplinary action.

The employee will comply with all federal and state laws, and County policies, including the County Remote Work Policy. Failure to comply may result in loss of remote work privileges and/or disciplinary measures up to and including termination.

Remote work employees must use County provided computer hardware and software to perform their jobs. They must abide by the County's Acceptable Use Policy, software licensing and data privacy, the requirements set forth in the MN Government Data Practices Act, as well as federal and state privacy regulations. The cost of the required equipment will be the responsibility of the Remote Worker's department.

XIV. Remote Connections & Phone Lines:

Long distance credit cards may be provided to the staff if needed.

XV. Remote work Agreement:

The Remote Worker, Supervisor, Department Head, County Administrator and County Board will be required to sign a Remote Work Agreement setting out the terms and conditions of the agreed upon remote work arrangement.

The Remote Work Agreement must be discussed and renewed annually, or whenever there is a major job change (such as a promotion), or whenever the Remote Worker or supervisor changes positions. Because remote work was selected as a feasible work option based on a combination of job characteristics, employee characteristics, and supervisor characteristics, a change in any one of these elements may require a review of the remote work arrangement.

Remote works a work arrangement between an individual employee and his/her supervisor. The Remote Worker has no automatic right to telecommute. A supervisor has no authority to require an employee to telecommute unless it was a condition of employment or a requirement of the job description. Remote Workers and new supervisors are encouraged to continue remote work arrangements by mutual agreement. Neither should be required to continue a remote work arrangement when it is not in the best interests of either or both.

XVI. Assessment and Evaluation:

Each Department will evaluate the effectiveness of their remote work program annually. Evaluation should measure employee and manager satisfaction, and employee effectiveness.

XVII. Mail

- Depending on the number of days per week of remote work status, the employee's business mail may be electronically scanned and forwarded via email on a daily basis or will be placed in the employee's mailbox located at the main office. Mail options will be discussed and decisions made based on agreement between the supervisor and employee. Depending on the situation, outbound mail may be processed from the employee's work location, utilizing a requisition process for stamps, or brought into the office for stamping and processing.