



## TOWN OF ROCKLAND Human Resources

### Guidelines for Telecommuting During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Health Emergency

Due to the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) health emergency, The Town Administrator has authorized telecommuting arrangements to support Town operations. These arrangements will remain in effect until a vote of the Board of Selectmen terminating the Declaration of Emergency of March 17, 2020 or until revoked by the Town Administrator or his/her designee, whichever comes first; the Town will continue to monitor guidance from health officials and the need for remote work arrangements. This action does not create a precedent, practice or expectation for the manner in which same or similar conditions will be addressed in the future.

**Definition:** Telecommuting entails a work at home arrangement or a remote access arrangement for at least part of the work-week on a regular basis. Telecommuting may be appropriate for employees as determined by the Department Head/Supervisor and authorized by the Town Administrator or his/her designee.

**Eligibility:** The Town Administrator will work with the Assistant Town Administrator, Department Heads and/or other supervisors to determine the feasibility of telecommuting for each employee, as well as the scope of their work during the temporary telecommuting arrangement. The ultimate authority to allow an employee to work remotely is held by the Town Administrator or his/her designee.

There are some Town of Rockland positions that require the employee to be physically present in the workplace. These employees, as determined by the Town Administrator or his/her designee, Board of Selectmen, Chief of Police, Fire Chief, Board of Health, Highway Director/Surveyor and Water Commissioners, may not be eligible to work remotely from home and may be subject to job reassignments during a period of telecommuting. Job reassignments will be made at the discretion and direction of the Department Head and in conjunction with the Town Administrator or his/her designee. Please refer to the Town's Emergency Reassignment of Duties Policy for additional information.

**Conditions of Telecommuting:** The employee's duties, obligations, responsibilities, conditions of employment and essential functions remain unchanged while working remotely. All Town of Rockland policies, practices and instructions continue to apply as if the employee were working at the Town's work location. The employee should raise any questions about the application of a policy in a remote setting with his/her supervisor and/or Human Resources.

Department Heads and supervisors retain all rights to assign work, and exercise any other managerial prerogative, during any telecommuting arrangement. Supervisors will communicate the assignments or tasks are appropriate to be performed remotely.

Employees should remain accessible and productive during scheduled work hours. Supervisors may contact the employee via telephone, email, or videoconference during work hours to discuss work assignments, tasks and work status. The supervisor may request a written summary of activities

weekly or as needed.

In addition to the regular working conditions, the Employee must adhere to the additional conditions during the temporary remote work arrangement:

- a. The Employee's work schedule shall be the normal hours of work prescribed by the positions' job description or collective bargaining agreement. Any temporary changes to the normal hours of work must be approved by the Employee's supervisor.
- b. The Employee shall provide their supervisor and the Town Administrator or his/her designee the address and telephone number where they may be reached while working remotely.
- c. The employee understands that if Management determines that the remote working arrangement is not functioning as envisioned or desired, Management may alter the terms of this policy with notice to the employee and Union.
- d. While working remotely the Employee will:
  - i. Remain accessible during their scheduled hours;
  - ii. Check in with their supervisor to discuss status and open issues as frequently as deemed necessary;
  - iii. Be available for video/teleconferences, scheduled on an as-needed basis;
  - iv. Be available to physically attend scheduled work meetings as requested or required by the Department;
  - v. Request supervisor approval in advance of working any overtime hours (if employee is non-exempt);
  - vi. Take rest and meal breaks while working remotely in full compliance with all applicable Town policies or collective bargaining agreements; and
  - vii. Request supervisor approval to use vacation, sick, or other leave in the same manner as when working at the employee's regular work location.

**Schedule:** Employees will maintain the same work schedule, unless otherwise notified. The employee must be available by telephone, email, or remote meeting during the work schedule. The Town may require employees to return to regular, in-office work as necessary and at any time.

**Schedule (continued):** Non-exempt employees' hours may not exceed their regular weekly work schedule. Additional work hours and overtime must be authorized in advance by the Town Administrator.

An employee who is unable to work remotely due to illness or another reason should notify their supervisor. Supervisors and Human Resources will determine the employee's eligibility to use paid time off (sick, vacation, personal, or other) in accordance with the Town's policies.

**Timesheet:** All employees paid on an hourly basis should complete a timesheet to record their telecommuting dates, hours worked and lunch/other breaks.

**Confidentiality:** Employees are expected to ensure the protection of confidential and privacy information that is accessible remotely.

**Remote Connectivity/Remote Communications with the Public, Supervisors & Co-Workers:** Access to emails and network (Intranet and file shares) should be done using a computer provided and managed by the Town of Rockland's IT department unless otherwise approved by the IT Director and Town Administrator or his/her designee. The employee should use the IT department's recommended remote communication tools such as email, remote meetings, etc. for all electronic communications.

**Safety/Security:** The employee should maintain a safe work environment and provide a secure location for Town equipment and materials. The employee will exercise reasonable care to protect the equipment against theft, accidental damage, and environmental harm. The employee assigned to the equipment, and no one else, may use it for the purpose of Town business only. The Town does not relinquish control over any of the components of the system, materials stored in the system, or files contained in the system and reserves the right to examine all data stored in the machines and the network; users should expect only limited privacy if any personal files are stored on the Town's system. Users should keep in mind that email is considered a written communication subject to public records laws. The employee will comply with the Town's Offsite-Use of Laptop Computers and other Town-Owned Equipment, Mobile Device, and Internet, Digital Information & Communication Acceptable Use policies.

**Injury While Working Remotely:** The employee will promptly notify his/her supervisor and/or Human Resources if a work-related injury occurs while working remotely. If medical attention is required, the employee should immediately contact his/her medical provider or go to a nearby urgent care facility. The incident will be reported to the Town's Workers' Compensation Insurer for investigation and a claims approval/non-approval determination.