



Work from Home Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to implement procedures and expectations of Township of Southgate (Township) staff permitted, with Management approval, to work from home on an occasional basis when required under special circumstances, **temporary conditions, part-time, full-time** and/or as required for emergency measures. It is preferred that employees work within the office when possible, however this policy is meant for times when this is not possible **or where accommodation challenges exist or when it is more efficient for the Township.**

2. Policy Scope

This Policy applies to all Township employees whose jobs have been deemed as possible for working at home when required. It is the Township's expectation that an employee can complete all required work from home at the same productivity rate as if they attended the regular worksite. In some cases of emergencies, employees may be assigned to work from home with a productivity rate that is less than 100% **or when the level of required technology servicing may not be available.** This will be assigned by the CAO for emergency purposes only.

3. Eligibility

- a. Due to service delivery needs and the nature of work, working from home cannot be implemented for all positions. Some areas will have greater flexibility to facilitate working from home and as such, there will be variation across the Township in the ability to adopt this Policy.
- b. All working from home decisions shall be made in a fair and equitable manner with considerations of the Township's best interest. Each request will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the circumstances, nature of work, and service delivery needs, as well as the employee's demonstrated work habits **and productivity.**
- c. A Supervisor will submit to Human Resources (HR) a request for a particular position to work at home. HR will consider and if appropriate, **get work with the** CAO to approve **new working arrangements.** The Supervisor will then work with the employee to complete a formal Work from Home Agreement (Schedule A) for final approval.
- d. Work at home arrangements will continue to be subject to operational and other work-related requirements and may be modified or cancelled, as necessary. If at any time a work from home arrangement no longer meets the needs of the Township or productivity goals, the Township reserves the right to cancel or alter the agreement and have the employee return to their regular work location on a fulltime or part time basis. **Work from Home Agreements will be reviewed annually as part of the performance review process for final approval by HR and the CAO.**
- e. The Township will provide as much notice as possible to any employee working at home if the arrangement needs to be modified or cancelled; however, there may be circumstances where arrangements need to be modified or cancelled immediately.



4. Expectations and Conditions

- a. All staff who are approved to work from home for a time period of more than two (2) consecutive days, are required to work with their Supervisor and Department Head to complete Schedule A: Work From Home Agreement and submit it to Human Resources.
- b. The employee is responsible for continuing to comply with all Southgate corporate and administrative policies & procedures and Ontario Employment Laws (Employment Standards Act (ESA)) as they relate to the employee's job responsibilities. The employee's employment will continue to be bound by the Township's conditions of employment and all other applicable Township policies and procedures. This includes working and reporting their normal hours per day or as adjusted by the Work From Home Agreement. Any overtime continues to require prior approval.
- c. The employee's compensation, benefits, work status, and general work responsibilities will not change due to working from home.
- d. The employee is expected to keep in regular communication with their Supervisor and to provide updates on work projects and efforts as arranged. Employees may be asked to document what they have been working on from home and submit it **periodically on a weekly or bi-weekly basis**.
- e. It is the expectation of the Township that employees are to complete all required work from home and are available as required during regular business hours. This does not impact Manager or Supervisor responsibilities or on-call employees to respond to issues after regular business hours when a response is required by phone or onsite.
- f. The employee is expected to follow, using Township computer devices, software and other municipal technology in a home office, with the same security protocols they would have at the office including following all Southgate IT policies, keeping all sensitive Township information secure and being vigilant for phishing **cyber** attacks and other computer viruses, etc.
- g. The employee will continue to follow regular protocol for leaves of absence listed in Personnel Policy #1. This includes:
 - Sick Leave requests. If an employee is unable to carry out the duties of their position, when working at home due to illness or injury, they will follow normal protocol for reporting the absence;
 - Vacation requests; and
 - Other leaves of absence that the employee is entitled to.

5. Use of Township property

- a. All equipment and documents (electronic and hard copy) used by the employee in their work for the Township, should be treated as proprietary and confidential. Accordingly, they must be kept in a secure work area and must not be accessible by others. Unauthorized individuals are not to be permitted access to any files, equipment, or documents. This means that employees will take the necessary steps



to ensure that all electronic files and physical data is not accessible to others whether the employee is physically in or out of the home office.

- b. All Township owned electronic devices and equipment will remain subject to provisions of Policy #83 Information Technology and Mobile Device Policy.
- c. Office supplies (paper, pens, etc.) will be provided by the Township as required for the employee to perform their duties.
- d. Employees must take reasonable steps to protect Township property from theft, damage, and misuse. Employees must notify their Supervisor immediately of any loss or damage to Township equipment or property in their possession.

6. Use of Employee's Personal Property

- a. It is expected that the employee will setup a suitable home office in one permanent location at their own personal residence. If this is not possible, please contact HR.
- b. Costs for furniture necessary to work from home such as chairs, desks, filing cabinets, etc. will not be reimbursed by the Township and are the employee's responsibility.
- c. ~~Prior approval must be obtained from the employee's Supervisor in order to be reimbursed for reasonable items, such as long distance work related calls that must be placed using the employee's personal phone or extra internet capacity costs. Expense reports and proof of expense must be provided.~~
- d. The employee is responsible for ensuring adequate home insurance is in place to cover their home workspace. The employee is expected to contact their insurance broker to ensure they have adequate coverage for General Liability, Theft, etc.
- e. In-person work-related meetings are not permitted to take place in personal homes. They must instead take place on the Township's premises or other locations (other government, consultant or client office) that are professional in nature to facilitate an efficient and productive meeting that is cost effective related to travel and incidental expenses. Virtual meetings via video conferencing platform are permitted and may be expected. If the employee is not setup to participate in such meetings, they should speak to HR.
- f. The Township will not be held liable for any damages to an employee's property or for any injuries to family members, visitors, or others in the employee's home while the employee is working from home.

7. Health and Safety

- a. Employees who work from home continue to be covered under *the Occupational Health and Safety Act* and *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act* as an extension of the regular workplace.
- b. The employee is responsible for setting up and maintaining a designated workspace



that meets workplace health and safety requirements. This includes ensuring:

- i.** The work area reasonably accommodates the required furniture and equipment.
 - ii.** The floor is in good condition and free from slip or trip hazards.
 - iii.** Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors are properly installed and maintained.
 - iv.** A first aid kit is available.
 - v.** Lighting is sufficient for the tasks being performed.
 - vi.** Ventilation and room temperature are good and can be controlled.
 - vii.** There is a path to an exit that is wide, free of obstructions, and reasonably direct.
 - viii.** Fixed electrical components (outlets, switches, etc.) are in good condition.
 - ix.** Electrical cords are safely routed or stowed.
 - x.** Electrical equipment is free from any obvious external damage.
 - xi.** The work area and equipment are cleaned and sanitized on a regular basis.
- c. The employee is expected to continue following ~~any~~ all of the Township's **Health and Safety policies and other operational pandemic** protocols at home when applicable. ~~including frequent hand washing and avoiding others who are unwell.~~
- d. The employee must report all work-related accidents or injuries to their Supervisor and complete the necessary forms in accordance with Township's Policy #33A, as soon as practicable.
- e. Employees who are injured while working from home are eligible to apply for WSIB benefits. While the WSIB assesses each case individually based on its circumstances, generally the injury must have occurred in the course of the regular work hours and/or in the home/workplace, which the Ministry of Labour defines as the actual space where work is conducted during the time when work is being done.
- f. Incidents of workplace violence and harassment must be reported to the employee's Supervisor and Human Resources immediately as per Policy #33B (e.g., harassment via email or phone calls by colleagues, members of the public, etc.).
- g. The employee is required to report any work-related hazards which exist at home to their Supervisor. This may include hazards related to workstation set up or domestic violence.
- h. If the home workplace is found to be unsafe and cannot be made safe, the Township may revoke or cancel the employee's work agreement or work from home arrangement.
- i. To support a healthy and safe work environment, employees are expected to create a workspace at home that is as ergonomic as possible.



8. Implementation

Supervisor's Responsibilities:

- a. Comply with all provisions of this guideline.
- b. Review and consider requests from employees to work from home, either on a short-term or long-term basis.
- c. Maintain consistent and regular communications with employees working from home, including setting expectations, employee workplans to manage progress and monitoring progress and performance.
- d. Address any reports of hazards or unsafe conditions as provided by the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

Employee responsibilities:

- a. Employees are responsible for complying with this policy when working from home.

Human Resources Responsibilities:

- a. Maintain records of all active working at home arrangements and Agreements.
- b. Provide guidance to employees regarding this policy and expectations.

9. Related Policies

The following policies must be taken into consideration and followed when working from home:

- Policy #1 Personnel Policy
- Policy #10 Employee Code of Conduct
- Policy #33A Occupational Health and Safety Policy
- Policy #33B Occupational Health and Safety Policy Harassment and Violence
- Policy #83 Information Technology (IT) & Mobile Devices.

10. Policy Review Cycle

This policy will be reviewed at minimum every three (3) years and updated if required.



Schedule A: Work from Home Agreement

EMPLOYEE NAME		POSITION	
SUPERVISOR		DEPARTMENT	
EFFECTIVE DATE	Click or tap to enter a	EXPIRY DATE	Click or tap to enter a

Remote Work Contact Information

HOME ADDRESS:			
HOME PHONE #:		CELL PHONE #:	

Work from Home Schedule

DAY OF THE WEEK	HOURS OF WORK	NOTES/ADDITIONAL INFO (E.g. varied schedule details)
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Equipment Borrowed for Home Use

Equipment	Model Number	Serial Number	Condition

Additional Information / Provisions

TOWNSHIP OF SOUTHGATE
Policy # 85
Work From Home Policy
Council Approval: May 4, 2022



Employee Acknowledgment

By placing my signature below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand all contents of this Agreement and Policy #85: Work from Home. I agree to adhere to these provisions and understand that violation of the provisions outlined in Policy #85: Work from Home may result in progressive corrective measures, up to and including termination of employment. I further acknowledge that I have an area to work in at home that is safe and where I can be productive.

Employee Signature _____ Date _____

APPROVAL

Department Head	Signature:	Date:
Notes:		
CAO	Signature:	Date:
Notes:		