

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Standard Operating Procedures

Policy Name: Teleworking

Policy Number: 104.66

Effective Date: 4/29/2021

Page Number: 1 of 12

Authority:
Commissioner

Originating Division:
Administration & Finance
Division (Human Resources)

Access Listing:
Level I: All Access

I. Introduction and Summary:

The Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC or Department) advocates Teleworking as a viable work option that benefits both the employer and the employee. GDC offers Teleworking to demonstrate a commitment to the environment, provide cost savings to the Department, and promote increased employee satisfaction, quality of life, efficiency, and productivity. Teleworking is a voluntary agreement between an employee and the supervisor and, therefore, is a privilege, not an entitlement.

II. Authority:

- A. GDC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): 104.22, Workers' Compensation; 104.37, Working Hours, Overtime, and Compensatory Time; 104.39.09, Administrative Leave; 104.61, Performance Management; 104.64, Adverse Actions (Classified Employees); 104.65, Adverse Actions (Unclassified Employees); and 104.67, Official Hours and Alternative Work Schedules; and
- B. Georgia Technology Authority Security Policies, Standards and Guidelines: Access Control (PS-08-009); Accountability of Assets (PS-08-002); Appropriate Use of Information Technology Resources (PS-08-003.2); Appropriate Use and Monitoring (SS-08-001), and any others deemed necessary.

III. Definitions:

- A. **Mobile Worker** - An employee who travels continuously and whose primary workplace is his/her home or an assigned office. The duties of these positions generally require the employee to meet and work off-site or at numerous locations dispersed throughout a geographic area. A Mobile Worker is a Teleworker.
- B. **Primary Workplace** - A Teleworker's usual and customary workplace.
- C. **Teleworker** - An employee who performs their job at an alternative workplace

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for at least one (1) or more days in a particular pay period. All Teleworkers must complete the Telework Agreement.

- D. **Teleworking** - Working at a location other than the employee's primary workplace.
- E. **Teleworking Agreement** - The signed document that outlines the understanding between the Department and the employee regarding the Teleworking arrangement.

IV. Statement of Policy and Applicable Procedures:

- A. Given the nature and variety of work performed in the Department, not all jobs will be well suited for Teleworking. Therefore, many of the jobs cannot be effectively accomplished through Teleworking. The characteristics of an effective and successful Teleworking program include:
 - 1. An assessment that an employee's job is suitable for Teleworking;
 - 2. A thorough and objective assessment of an employee's past performance, requisite job knowledge, and other work-related characteristics;
 - 3. The immediate supervisor's cooperation with and support for Teleworking, as well as his or her proficiency/ability to effectively manage the Teleworking employee in a non-traditional work environment; and
 - 4. The Teleworking employee's commitment to an effective and productive telework program.

NOTE: Jobs suitable for Teleworking are characterized by clearly defined results. A Teleworker's performance is measured by results rather than presence at the main work location; therefore, it is critical to

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ensure that performance expectations are clearly defined so that a proper evaluation can be conducted at designated intervals outlined in the telework agreement.

B. Eligibility:

1. To Telework, an employee must:
 - a. Be employed in or assigned to a position that requires or is conducive to Teleworking;
 - b. Have been employed with the Department for at least six (6) months;
 - c. Have an annual leave balance of at least forty (40) hours;
 - d. Have consistently met established productivity levels and, as applicable, his or her most previous performance evaluation reflects an overall rating of three (3) "Successful Performer" or higher; and
 - e. Have had no adverse actions during the current or immediately preceding review period.

C. Selection Considerations:

1. Jobs generally well suited for Teleworking have the following characteristics:
 - a. Infrequent face-to-face communication required where communication can be managed by telephone, electronic mail, facsimile, etc.;
 - b. Employee generally works alone handling information (e.g., work tasks incorporate such components as reading, writing, word processing, planning, etc.);

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- c. Clearly defined results;
 - d. Measurable work activities with objectives having identifiable time frames and check points;
 - e. Content versus process oriented;
 - f. Tasks that require concentration and/or large blocks of time when the employee works independently of others;
 - g. Work that can be performed without close supervision; and
 - h. Minimal requirements for special equipment.
2. Employees suited for Teleworking generally have the following characteristics or traits:
- a. Good oral and written communication skills. It is critical to the success of a Telework arrangement that an employee establish and maintain frequent communication with his or her supervisor and other co-workers;
 - b. Demonstrated history of successful job performance in his or her current job assignment as well as in previous position(s);
 - c. Self-motivated and responsible;
 - d. Familiar with requirements of his or her position;
 - e. Work independently;
 - f. Adaptable; and

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g. Results oriented.

D. Equipment:

1. The Teleworker shall generally provide the support equipment required to perform the job;
2. Equipment or software provided by the Department shall be used exclusively by the Teleworker to conduct government business and not for personal use;
3. Software provided by the Department shall not be duplicated. In most situations, the Department will provide a computer on campus that the Teleworker may access by remote desktop software;
4. The Department may provide a laptop for Mobile Workers. If necessary, the Teleworker's supervisor may send an equipment request to the Division Assistant Commissioner/Designee for approval by the Office of Information Technology (OIT); and
5. The Teleworker is responsible for safe transportation and set-up of equipment provided by the Department and must complete the Equipment Inventory Form (posted on the Department's intranet) before removing equipment from the Department's campus or receiving equipment through direct delivery.

E. Equipment Liability:

1. The following procedures apply to equipment owned by the Department and provided to the Teleworker:
 - a. The Department will repair and maintain the equipment;
 - b. The Teleworker is responsible for safe transportation of equipment to the

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location designated by the OIT for repair or maintenance unless movement of the equipment is likely to result in damage;

- c. The Department will provide surge protectors or other protective devices that must be used with the equipment;
- d. The Teleworker must comply with current virus protections and security measures recommended by OIT. Services such as GoToMyPC must remain installed and operating for access to continue;
- e. Software installed on Department equipment must be appropriately licensed and approved by OIT for use on equipment connected to the SOG/GDC's Network; and
- f. The misuse of equipment provided by the Department may be grounds for terminating the Telework arrangement and also may subject the employee to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.

F. Security and Access to Information:

- 1. Teleworkers must adhere to agency, state, and federal internet use, technology use, and data laws, regulations and policies, including but not limited to:
 - a. Georgia Technology Authority Security Policy on Access Control (PS-08-009);
 - b. Georgia Technology Authority Security Policy on Accountability of Assets (PS-08-002);
 - c. Georgia Technology Authority Security Policy on Appropriate Use of Information Technology Resources (PS-08-003.2); and

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- d. Georgia Technology Authority Policy on Appropriate Use and Monitoring (SS-08-001).

G. Work Rules:

1. An employee's compensation and benefits (including leave and holidays) are not impacted by a Telework arrangement. Teleworkers remain under the Department's Performance Management system and are required to participate fully in the process. A Teleworker's performance will be assessed in a manner similar to all non-Teleworking employees. Each Teleworker will have an established work schedule approved by his or her supervisor. With the approval of their supervisor, Teleworkers may:
 - a. Work either a standard five (5) day work week or one (1) of two (2) authorized alternative schedules referenced in SOP 104.67, Official Hours and Alternative Work Schedule;
 - b. Teleworkers must be accessible by telephone or cell phone to their supervisor, customers and co-workers during their established business hours, regardless of the work location. Telephone protocols during Teleworking should not differ from the office setting;
 - c. Each scheduled workday will include a non-paid lunch period of at least thirty (30) minutes. Proper monitoring of a Teleworker's time and attendance is critical to the success of each Telework arrangement;
 - d. Supervisors must ensure that Teleworkers account for all hours worked and leave taken. Teleworkers must accurately record daily hours and minutes worked and leave taken using the Department's timekeeping system; and
 - e. The Department Human Resources Director may approve a customized time sheet or record keeping system if operationally necessary.

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- H. Safety and Inspections: Teleworkers shall maintain their home or alternative workspace in a safe condition and free from hazards or other dangers. The Department reserves the right to inspect a homework space to ensure safety compliance and adherence with the telework program requirements regarding the workspace and furnishings. Any remodeling or electrical work to facilitate Teleworking is at the employee's expense.
- I. Workers' Compensation: Teleworkers are covered by Workers' Compensation during work hours and while performing work functions in the designated home or alternative work area. The employee's home or alternative is considered an extension of the Department's workspace. Consistent with Department guidelines, employees must report any work-related injury to their supervisor as soon as possible after the accident/injury occurs. See SOP 104.22, Workers' Compensation.
- J. Tax Implications: Teleworkers are fully responsible to determine any federal, state, and local tax implications resulting from working at home and are responsible for satisfying any personal tax obligations relative to Teleworking. Employees are encouraged to discuss these issues with their personal tax advisor.
- K. Dependent Care: Teleworking is not a substitute for dependent care. Employees will manage dependent care and personal responsibilities in a manner that allows the successful completion of job responsibilities.

NOTE: During a declared State of Emergency or other extenuating circumstances identified by the Governor's Office which affects the availability of schools and/or childcare providers, agencies may be flexible regarding the work schedules of teleworkers that are balancing the care of a child or dependent. Any decisions regarding the flexibility of work schedules under a declared State of Emergency will be made by the Commissioner or his/her designee.

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- L. Teleworking Agreement: Teleworkers and their immediate supervisors will sign a Teleworking Agreement (Attachment 1), which can be modified or terminated by the Department. The Teleworking Agreement must be reviewed and renewed annually at the beginning of each fiscal year in conjunction with the Performance Management Planning and evaluation process.

NOTE: If a proposed Telework Agreement is denied by the Reviewing Manager, the decision is final and is not appealable, grievable, or subject to review.

M. Employee and Supervisor/Management Responsibilities:

1. Employees shall:

- a. Complete the Teleworking Agreement (Attachment 1) and submit to their supervisor for approval;
- b. Become familiar with the provisions of this procedure, the Teleworking Agreement, and other Division guidelines;
- c. Sign the Teleworking Agreement along with their supervisor;
- d. Adhere to the terms and conditions of the Teleworking Agreement;
- e. Establish a dedicated and safe home office space or alternative worksite/office consistent with the requirements of this procedure;
- f. Be responsible for safe transportation and set-up of equipment provided by the Department and the accessing of information over the internet;
- g. Establish work practices to ensure a successful Teleworking experience;

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- h. Report to Department work sites for meetings, trainings, etc., as required;
 - i. Safeguard proprietary or confidential Departmental information;
 - j. Determine any federal, state, or local tax implications resulting from working at home and satisfy any personal tax obligations; and
 - k. Comply with all other terms and conditions of employment.
- 2. Supervisors shall:
 - a. Objectively consider an employee's Telework request within the provisions of this procedure and other Division guidelines;
 - b. Become familiar with the provisions of this procedure and Telework Agreement; and
 - c. Decide whether a Telework arrangement is beneficial to the Department and employee.
- 3. If the request is approved:
 - a. Meet with the employee to review the Teleworking Agreement;
 - b. Ensure the employee fully understands responsibilities associated with Teleworking; and
 - c. Provide the employee a copy of the signed Teleworking Agreement;
 - d. Maintain an inventory of equipment provided to the Teleworker by the Department;

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- e. Continue normal supervisory activities including feedback and performance evaluations;
 - f. Prepare an amendment to the employee's Performance Plan that specifically details responsibility areas and standards of performance pertaining to the terms of the Teleworking Agreement;
 - g. Revisit the Teleworking Agreement annually for approval/disapproval; and
 - h. Perform site visit(s) as necessary to ensure compliance with Teleworking program requirements.
4. If the request is disapproved:
- a. Provide an explanation to the employee outlining the reason(s) for the decision; and
 - b. Revise the Teleworking Agreement to reflect any changes;
5. Reviewing Managers shall:
- a. Review Telework proposals submitted by subordinate supervisors who believe that the duties and responsibilities of a position can be more efficiently and effectively performed by a Teleworking employee;
 - b. Become familiar with the provisions of this procedure the Teleworking Agreement, and other Division guidelines;
 - c. Determine whether the recommended position is suitable for full-time Teleworking;

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- d. Include the following statement in the Performance Management Plan of supervisors with Teleworking employees:

“This employee is supervisor of a Teleworker(s). The supervisor must ensure the employee's compliance with the provision of Standard Operating Procedure on Teleworking and to the signed Telework Agreement”

- e. Notify the Department Human Resources Director and the Division Assistant Commissioner/Designee if a Telework Agreement is denied; and
- f. Be responsible for the effective and proper management of the Teleworking program in his or her respective Division.

V. Attachments:

Attachment 1: Telework Agreement

VI. Record Retention of Forms Relevant to this Policy:

Upon completion, Attachment 1 shall be retained for one (1) year after agreement ends in local personnel office and Correctional Human Resources Management (CHRM).