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# DAKOTA COUNTY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

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## Policy 3182 Telework

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Department: Employee Relations

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Related Policies:

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### **POLICY STATEMENT**

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It is the policy of Dakota County to permit employees, under certain circumstances, to conduct county work through telework. Telework may not be an option for all county employees depending on factors that may include, but not be limited to employee job performance and current job duties, the business needs of the department and its customers. This policy provides standards and expectations for all county telework arrangements.

Telework is a work arrangement approved by a supervisor that permits employees to work off-site in their homes or other approved alternate location for part or all of the workweek. This arrangement may be full or part-time and is described as a substitute to working in a County work site. Teleworkers commute to work by telephone or other telecommunications equipment rather than by vehicle.

Teleworkers will at all times be cognizant of the public's expectation of productive, dedicated and faithful service from all County employees. Both actual and apparent conflicts with this expectation must be avoided and the existence of any such conflicts will result in termination of the Telework arrangement and/or disciplinary action.

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### **DEFINITIONS**

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*Telework:* A work arrangement that may be long-term, temporary, or intermittent, that permits employees to work off-site in their home or other approved alternate location for part or all of the work week, as a substitute to working in a County work site.

*Long-Term Telework:* Telework approved as a long-term arrangement that occurs on a consistent, ongoing schedule with no end date, although required to be renewed annually.

*Temporary Telework:* Telework that occurs on a consistent schedule that is approved for a time-limited duration.

*Intermittent Telework:* Telework approved for a one-time, short-term duration that is minimally 4 consecutive work hours.

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### **GENERAL**

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There are three types of approved telework, as defined above: Long-Term, Temporary, and Intermittent.

The following situations are not covered by this policy and are not considered Telework as defined in this policy.

- County work conducted by employees in a non-county work site as required by their functional job responsibilities;
- County work conducted by employees on an intermittent or irregular basis, at a location other than their normal and customary work location, for less than 4 consecutive hours.

### **Terms and Conditions of Employment**

Teleworking does not change the terms and conditions of employment such as salary, benefits, or job responsibilities and work tasks. When working from a telework location (e.g., home), that location will be considered the place of reporting. Teleworkers work at a designated location during work hours as agreed upon by the teleworker and supervisor and will not do work anywhere else unless approved by their supervisor.

Teleworkers do not receive a special commuting allowance when working at the telework location. Overtime, compensatory time, or leave provisions contained in County Policy or collective bargaining agreement provisions are not altered to accommodate a telework arrangement.

### **Performance Standards and Expectations of Teleworkers**

Performance standards for teleworkers are no less than those of employees working in a County office doing the same work. If modifications to the standards are necessary, they must be discussed with and agreed to by the supervisor.

Employees entering into a telework arrangement have scheduled hours consistent with their work unit/contract and provisions of the telework arrangement. Work schedules for on-site and off-site work hours are pre-approved by the employee's supervisor if different from the arrangement specifications.

Teleworkers will be as accessible as their on-site counterparts during their agreed upon regular business/work hours, regardless of work location. Telework is not for the purpose of allowing an employee to provide dependent care. Teleworkers who work at home will manage dependent care and personal responsibilities in the same way they meet these responsibilities while working at the usual work site and in a way that allows them to successfully meet job responsibilities.

Other potential distractions to the teleworker should be considered and conflicting demands resolved in advance of commencing a telework arrangement.

### **Data Management and Security**

Employees who have an approved telework arrangement must take all necessary precautions to keep County data and information secure and to prevent unauthorized access to any County system or information from the telework location. Because of the nature of telework and the presence of others who are not employed by the County, employees have a greater individual responsibility for data security than employees have while working at a County office.

## **Approval Process and Telework Agreement**

All long-term telework arrangements must be documented and approved by a Division Director, Deputy Division Director, Department Director, Deputy Department Director or similar. All Temporary and Intermittent Telework arrangements must be documented and approved in accordance with the procedures of the employee's division or department.

## **Equipment**

Dakota County, at its sole discretion, may choose to provide equipment and related supplies for use by the teleworker or permit the use of employee-owned equipment. Any equipment supplied by the County for the use at a remote location may not be used for personal purposes by the employee or non-County employees. This aspect of the telework is monitored by the County on a periodic basis. When using personally owned equipment for telework purposes, the employee shall keep all County data and information secure and not accessible by others.

In the event of delay in repair or replacement of equipment or any other circumstance under which it would be impossible for the employee to telework, the employee will be assigned to do other work and/or return to the County work place.

## **Work Site Inspection**

Long-term teleworkers who work at home, or other approved location, will have a designated work space agreed to by the supervisor and maintained by the employee. Prior to initiation of any long-term telework arrangement, the work space will be assessed for compliance with applicable requirements.

During the term of the arrangement, inspections of designated work sites by the supervisor, or another representative of the County, are conducted to ensure that the telework arrangement is being followed including, but not limited to, employee and work site suitability, protection of data, the assurance that safe working conditions exist, and to maintain, repair, inspect, or retrieve County owned equipment as necessary. Employees who are long-term teleworkers must allow access to their remote workspace for the purpose of performing work site inspections as requested without prior notice.

The teleworker will be responsible for any and all costs associated with remodeling, set-up, and maintenance of the designated work space (e.g., furniture), including any required reasonable accommodations.

Supervisors have discretion to conduct work site inspections for employees who conduct county work in a home setting, or other approved location, under a temporary or intermittent telework arrangement.

## **Disclaimer**

Teleworking is a voluntary program and may be terminated by the County or the employee upon notice in writing at any time. Failure of the teleworker to comply with all relevant laws, policies, provisions, requirement or expectations, or the terms of the telework arrangement may result in the loss of telework privileges and/or disciplinary action as necessary or appropriate.

## PROCEDURES

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All telework arrangements will be consistent with County standards. Divisions will develop, subject to necessary approvals, more detailed supplemental policies and procedures as necessary to implement the provisions of this policy in ways that align with and support the specific business needs of the division and its customers.

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Board Resolution or Manager Signature:                      Res. 19-710                      9/24/2019

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