



North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Michael F. Easley, Governor

William G. Ross Jr., Secretary

POLICY

Section: Human Resources

Subject: Teleworking, including Home Duty Station

Approved By: DENR Secretary

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PREFACE

Teleworking is gaining acceptance in the private sector and in state government as a viable workplace means to aid in commuter pollutant reduction and increased worker productivity. North Carolina's Office of State Personnel created the State teleworking policy when it discovered the benefits of employee retention and greater productivity. DENR conducted teleworking pilot programs with five DENR divisions which demonstrated the viability and successful control of teleworking for many DENR jobs. In addition, teleworking is a flexible tool to aid in a Division Director's compliance with the DENR Strategic goals on employee retention improvement, innovation in the DENR workplace, and DENR's role in air quality improvement. The flexibility and pollutant reductions aspects of teleworking make it an example of achieving DENR's Vision through "innovation, teamwork, and partnership," as well as DENR's Honor Code for employee respect, communication, accountability, innovation, teamwork and work ethics.

Teleworking is a tool DENR divisions can use to comply with specific state and federal programs that encourage teleworking. The North Carolina legislature passed bills that enhance and expand auto emissions testing programs in 48 counties by 2006. The EPA designated 32 counties in North Carolina as 8-hour Ozone Non-attainment Areas. In response, DENR has moved quickly to address emissions and achieving attainment. With thousands of DENR employees commuting everyday, teleworking will help reduce auto emissions in many of these counties as well as demonstrate that DENR practices what it preaches. DENR is committed to several federal programs that encourage telecommuting. The most direct is DENR's formal membership in the EPA and U.S. DOT Best Workplace Practices for Commuters program. One of the goals of this program is for program partners to provide a significant teleworking program that reduces six percent of commute trips on a monthly basis. And, teleworking is a tool to help DENR divisions to be an example for the federal Clean Air Act.

PURPOSE

Teleworking will provide DENR Division Directors with a program for enhancing employee productivity, realizing potential utility savings, and improving employee moral. It also helps accomplish DENR's Strategic Goals, and demonstrates DENR's Vision Statement and Honor Code. The teleworking policy allows DENR divisions to work within the State teleworking policy and state legislation, and honor DENR's obligations to federal programs that encourage teleworking. The DENR teleworking policy enables managers and division directors to meet programmatic goals, to identify positions with job responsibilities suitable for teleworking and to approve employees for teleworking through a formal, systematic and flexible structure based on measured performance.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) that teleworking will be administered consistent with the needs of the state and the employing program.

It is recognized that a public employer has a special obligation to insure that employees and work resources are being used efficiently and productively.

The responsibility to determine suitable positions and to approve an employee for teleworking is wholly within management discretion and is not appealable to the State Personnel Commission.

Formal signed agreements are required for long term teleworking arrangements.

Management may approve occasional, intermittent, and short-term periods of teleworking when productivity and/or program delivery will be enhanced. Formal signed agreements are not required for these periods of time.

Supervisors must manage and account for staff output and performance. The teleworking policy will not be utilized to address performance problems, for example, attendance and tardiness.

COVERED EMPLOYEES

The provisions of this policy apply to employees who telework as part of their work time and to the supervisors and managers who assign and review work for those employees. Teleworking is available, with management approval, as a work option in DENR for full time or part time (half time or more) permanent, probationary, trainee, or time-limited employees.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

For purposes of this policy, the terms below mean the following:

Central Workplace: An employee's assigned place of work or duty station owned or operated by the State or a site that is the primary workstation for field based employees. Typically a central workplace is a duty station from which an employer along with employees, in the same work unit, perform the functions of their jobs. However an employee's home, in instances in which it is the primary workstation for the field-based employee, may be considered the central workplace.

Home Duty Station: A teleworking arrangement whereby the employee's home is designated as the duty station. Home duty station designation requires prior approval by the Office of State Budget and Management on an annual basis [GS 136-6(a)(1)]. Typically, home duty station designations apply to those employees whose major duties are to perform fieldwork locally outside of their homes. Special provisions do apply to Home Duty designation. See the section, Special Provisions for Home Duty Designation.

Duty Station: The job location at which the employee spends the majority of his/her working hours. For the employee in travel status, the duty station should be the point where travel begins the majority of the time (home or office).

Telework/Teleworking: A flexible work arrangement in which supervisors direct or permit employees to work at home for all or part of the workweek in accordance with their same performance expectations and other approved or agreed-upon terms. It does not include work performed at a temporary worksite for limited duration.

Teleworker: An employee engaged in teleworking.

DENR Teleworking Coordinator: A staff member of the DENR Division of Human Resources who is assigned the responsibility for administering the DENR Teleworking program.

Teleworking Agreement: A written agreement that details the terms and conditions by which an employee is allowed to engage in teleworking.

Long Term Teleworking Arrangements: Teleworking that is designed to be a continual arrangement and permanent in nature.

Short Term Teleworking: Teleworking that is occasional, intermittent or sporadic.

SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR HOME DUTY STATION DESIGNATION

Office support for home duty station staff will be the responsibility of the program division, not the DENR Regional office.

When making a home duty station designation, management must assess the potential impact on other processes and programs, especially the assignment of vehicles and office space. Management must identify those situations where it is more efficient from the state's perspective to have the employee begin his/her workday immediately upon leaving their driveway.

Employees who have a home duty station designation may be allowed to park a state-owned vehicle at home provided they have prior approval from Motor Fleet Management.

The department must submit an annual request for prior approval of home duty stations to the Office of State Budget and Management (OSBM) by the second week in December of each preceding calendar year for all employees whose home is also their duty station.

When hiring new employees or designating the home as the duty station of current employees during the calendar year, a revision to the annual report must be submitted to OSBM for prior approval.

Employees who are assigned to a DENR Regional Office or are living in state-owned facilities should not be listed on the report.

References

State Personnel Manual, Section 3
OSBM Budget Manual, Section 5
General Statute 126-1 and Art. 12
General Statute 138-6
DENR Human Resources SOP Manual