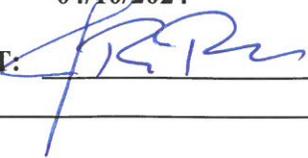
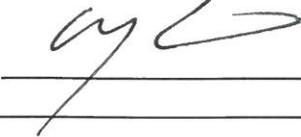


Scotts Valley Fire Protection District	
POLICY: 1204 DATE APPROVED: 04/10/2024 BOARD PRESIDENT: 	SUBJECT: Remote Work / Telecommuting FIRE CHIEF: 

Policy 1204: Remote Work / Telecommuting

Scope: Full time Staff assigned to the forty (40) hour work week or Administration including staff who work a prorated number of hours as scheduled by the Fire Chief.

Objective

Telecommuting allows employees to work at home, on the road or in a satellite location for all or part of their workweek. The Scotts Valley Fire Protection District (SVFPD) considers telecommuting to be a viable, flexible work option when both the employee and the job duties are suited to such an arrangement. Telecommuting may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not for others. Telecommuting is not an entitlement or a benefit that applies to all staff, and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with SVFPD.

Procedures

Telecommuting can be informal, such as working from home for a short-term project or on the road during business travel, or a formal, set schedule of working away from the office as described below. Either an employee or a supervisor can suggest telecommuting as a possible work arrangement.

Any telecommuting arrangement made will be on a trial basis for the first three months and may be discontinued at will and at any time at the request of either the telecommuter or the Fire Chief. Every effort will be made to provide 30 days' notice of such change to accommodate commuting, child care and other issues that may arise from the termination of a telecommuting arrangement. There may be instances, however, when no notice is possible.

Full time telecommuting may be approved on a short-term and limited basis, and at the discretion of the Fire Chief. Because the SVFPD is a service-based organization, telecommuting staff are still expected to work at a District Facility at least two (2) days per week, or an adjusted equivalency for prorated full-time staff.

Eligibility

Individuals requesting formal telecommuting arrangements must be employed with SVFPD for a minimum of six (6) months of continuous, regular employment and must have a satisfactory performance record.

Before entering into any telecommuting agreement, the employee and manager, with the assistance of the Fire Chief, will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement, reviewing the following areas:

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- **Employee suitability:** The employee and manager will assess the needs and work habits of the employee, compared to traits customarily recognized as appropriate for successful telecommuters.
- **Job responsibilities:** The employee and manager will discuss the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a telecommuting arrangement.
- **Equipment needs, workspace design considerations and scheduling issues:** The employee and manager will review the physical workspace needs and the appropriate location for the telework.
- **Tax and other legal implications:** The employee must determine any tax or legal implications under IRS, state and local government laws, and/or restrictions of working out of a home-based office. Responsibility for fulfilling all obligations in this area rests solely with the employee.

If the employee and manager agree, and the Fire Chief concurs, a draft telecommuting agreement will be prepared and signed by all parties, and a three-month trial period will commence. See Telecommuting Agreement attached.

Evaluation of telecommuter performance during the trial period will include regular interaction by phone, e-mail, or other technology between the employee and the manager, and weekly face-to-face meetings to discuss work progress and problems. At the end of the trial period, the employee and manager will each complete an evaluation of the arrangement and make recommendations for continuance or modifications.

Evaluation of telecommuter performance beyond the trial period will be consistent with that received by employees working at a District facility in both content and frequency but will focus on work output and completion of objectives rather than on time-based performance.

An appropriate level of communication between the telecommuter and supervisor will be agreed to as part of the discussion process and will be more formal during the trial period. After conclusion of the trial period, the manager and telecommuter will communicate at a level consistent with employees working at a District facility or in a manner and frequency that is appropriate for the job and the individuals involved.

Equipment

On a case-by-case basis, the SVFPD will determine, with information supplied by the employee and the manager, the appropriate equipment needs (including hardware, software, modems, phone and data lines and other office equipment) for each telecommuting arrangement. The Fire Chief or designee will serve as a resource in this matter. Equipment supplied by the organization will be maintained by the organization. Equipment supplied by the employee, if deemed appropriate by the organization, will be maintained by the employee. The SVFPD accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment. The SVFPD reserves the right to make determinations as to appropriate equipment, subject to change at any time. Equipment supplied by the organization is to be used for business purposes only. The telecommuter must sign an inventory of all SVFPD property received and agree to take appropriate action to protect the items from damage or theft. Upon termination/separation of employment, all District property will be returned, unless other arrangements have been made.

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SVFPD will supply the employee with appropriate office supplies (pens, paper, etc.) as deemed necessary. SVFPD will also reimburse the employee for business-related expenses, such as phone calls and shipping costs, that are reasonably incurred in carrying out the employee's job.

The employee will establish an appropriate work environment within their home / remote work location for work purposes. SVFPD will not be responsible for costs associated with the setup of the employee's home office, such as remodeling, furniture or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to the home office space.

Security

Consistent with the organization's expectations of information security for employees working at the office, telecommuting employees will be expected to ensure the protection of proprietary and sensitive information accessible from their home office. Steps include the use of locked file cabinets and desks, regular password maintenance, and any other measures appropriate for the job and the environment.

Safety

Employees are expected to maintain their home workspace in a safe manner, free from safety hazards. SVFPD will provide each telecommuter with a safety checklist (attached) that must be completed at least twice per year. Injuries sustained by the employee in a home office location and in conjunction with his or her regular work duties are normally covered by the company's workers' compensation policy. Telecommuting employees are responsible for notifying the employer of such injuries as soon as practicable. The employee is liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to his or her home worksite.

Telecommuting is not designed to be a replacement for appropriate child care. Although an individual employee's schedule may be modified to accommodate child care needs, the focus of the arrangement must remain on job performance and meeting organizational demands. Prospective telecommuters are encouraged to discuss expectations of telecommuting with family members prior to entering a trial period.

Time Worked

Telecommuting employees who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act will be required to accurately record all hours worked using SVFPD's time-keeping system. Hours worked in excess of those scheduled per day and per workweek require the advance approval of the telecommuter's supervisor. Similarly, time off requests shall remain consistent with in-District facility work and subject to the same approval system. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the immediate termination of the telecommuting agreement.

Ad Hoc Arrangements

Temporary telecommuting arrangements may be approved for circumstances such as inclement weather, special projects or work-related travel. These arrangements are approved on an as-needed basis only, with no expectation of ongoing continuance.

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Other informal, short-term arrangements may be made for employees on family or medical leave, or limited duty to the extent practical for the employee and the organization and with the consent of the employee's health care provider, if appropriate.

All informal telecommuting arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the needs of the organization.

- Attachments:
Telecommuting Checklist
Telecommuting Agreement

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Checklist: Telecommuting Preparation

- Determine under which circumstances telecommuting will be permitted.
 - Employee requests to work from home.
 - As a reasonable accommodation due to an employee's disability.
 - Required by the employer.
 - Due to inclement weather.
 - For employees showing signs of illness.
 - For employees returning from travel to an area with a communicable disease outbreak.
- Identify which positions are/are not conducive to working from home.
 - Positions that can be regularly performed remotely.
 - Positions that include some job duties that can be performed remotely.
 - Positions that do not allow for remote work.
- Identify the equipment necessary for employees to work from home.
 - Determine if employees will be permitted to use personal devices/home computers for business purposes.
 - Determine if additional hardware must be purchased and identify the budget and timeline necessary for these items.
- Determine what level(s) of access will be permitted to the organization's networks and how access will occur.
- Identify the software needed for employees to work from home.
 - Coordinate with the IT program manager to install software as required.
 - Designate a point of contact within the IT department to troubleshoot and assist teleworkers.
- Review Telecommuting Policy.
 - Address timekeeping procedures for nonexempt employees if these will differ for teleworkers and address expectations for preapproved overtime work.
 - Determine if a virtual private network (VPN), remote desktop or portal exists and if not, determine if this technology is necessary for secure remote access to the organization's network.
- Communicate the telecommuting policy and procedures to employees.
- Develop a telecommuting agreement to be completed by the employee and his or her supervisor.
- Determine the training needs of supervisors and employees.
- Conduct a practice run if circumstances allow.
 - Offer a test day for employees requesting to work from home.
 - Conduct a trial telework day for all positions identified for telework.

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Working From Home Safety Checklist for Employees

Please print and complete this checklist to identify any hazards in your home-based workspace.

Our goal is to help you identify any safety concerns so that you can eliminate or avoid any risks. Evaluate each item on this checklist. Check each item that is not a risk.

Employee's name: _____ Assessment Date: _____

Housekeeping

- Floors are clear and free of tripping hazards
- Carpets are well secured to floor, free of frayed or loose seams
- Rugs have foam backing or anti-slip mats
- Office space is neat, clean and free of excessive combustibles (paper, boxes, files, etc.)
- Work area is reasonably quiet and free of distractions
- File cabinets are not top heavy
- Cabinets, shelves or furniture greater than 5' high are secured to prevent toppling during earthquake
- Books and supplies are stored to prevent falling during an earthquake
- Wheels on rolling files, or other mobile equipment, are free from binding when rolled, and can be locked to prevent rolling
- Cords, cables and other items are secured to prevent a tripping hazard
- Phone lines and electrical cords are secured under desk or along wall, away from heat sources
- Work area is well ventilated and heated/cooled to provide worker comfort
- If the home office is located below grade (basement), the space has been tested for radon
(see www.EPA.gov/radon for more information about radon hazards and mitigation)

Fire Safety

- Walkways, aisles and doorways are clear and unobstructed
- Working smoke detector/s cover the designated work space. The battery is functioning.
- There is more than one exit from work area
- Work area is kept free of flammable liquids, trash and clutter
- Combustible materials are kept at least 3' from radiators, portable heaters and other heat sources

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Electrical Safety

- All electrical office equipment is connected to a surge protector
- Electrical system is adequate for office equipment
- All plugs, cords, outlets and panels are in good condition and free of exposed conductors or broken insulation
- Extension cords and power strips are not daisy-chained, and no permanent extension cords are in use
- Electrical equipment is turned off when not in use
- Electrical outlets are grounded with three-pronged plugs. There's sufficient ventilation for electrical components

Ergonomic Safety

- Desk chair is in good condition; no loose wheels/casters or broken hardware/components
- When keyboarding, forearms are close to parallel with the floor. Wrists/hands in neutral position, i.e., in the same plane as forearms
- Computer monitor is roughly arm's length from eyes, with top of viewable portion of screen slightly below eye level, and free from noticeable glare during work times
- When seated, feet reach the floor, or are fully supported by a footrest
- Back is fully supported by chair or lumbar cushion
- Work area lighting is directed toward the side or behind line of vision, not in front or above it
- I have a clear understanding of neutral posture and how to properly adjust my workstation

Overall Safety

- All stairs with four or more steps have sturdy handrails
- Emergency phone numbers (hospital, fire department, police department) and my street address are clearly posted near phone
- First aid kit or materials are easily accessible and properly supplied
- Files and data are secured
- Written inventory with serial numbers of all office-provided equipment
- Online access to employer computer network via secured path (VPN or secured log in)

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Short-Term Telecommuting Agreement

Employee Information

Name: _____ Hire date: _____

Job title: _____

Assignment: _____

FLSA status: Exempt Nonexempt

This temporary telecommuting agreement will begin and end on the following dates:

Start date: _____ End date: _____

Temporary work location: _____

Employee schedule: _____

The employee agrees to the following conditions:

The employee will remain accessible and productive during scheduled work hours.

Nonexempt employees will record all hours worked and meal periods taken in accordance with regular timekeeping practices.

Nonexempt employees will obtain supervisor approval prior to working unscheduled overtime hours or taking leave hours.

The employee will report to the employer’s work location as necessary upon directive from his or her supervisor.

The employee will communicate regularly with his or her supervisor and co-workers, which includes a weekly written report of activities.

The employee will comply with all SVFPD rules, policies, practices and instructions that would apply if the employee were working at the employer’s work location.

The employee will maintain satisfactory performance standards.

The employee will make arrangements for regular dependent care and understands that telecommuting is not a substitute for dependent care. In emergency circumstances, exceptions may be made for employees with caregiving responsibilities.

The employee will maintain a safe and secure work environment at all times.

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The employee will allow the employer to have access to the telecommuting location for purposes of assessing safety and security, upon reasonable notice by the District.

The employee will report work-related injuries to his or her manager as soon as practicable.

SVFPD will provide the following equipment: _____

The employee will provide the following equipment: _____

The employee agrees that SVFPD equipment will not be used by anyone other than the employee and only for business-related work. The employee will not make any changes to security or administrative settings on District equipment. The employee understands that all tools and resources provided by the District shall remain the property of the District at all times.

The employee agrees to protect company tools and resources from theft or damage and to report theft or damage to his or her manager immediately.

The employee agrees to comply with District policies and expectations regarding information security. The employee will be expected to ensure the protection of proprietary and sensitive District and customer information accessible from their home offices.

SVFPD will reimburse employee for the following expenses:

Employee will submit expense reports with attached receipts in accordance with District expense reimbursement policy.

The employee understands that all terms and conditions of employment with the District remain unchanged, except those specifically addressed in this agreement.

The employee understands that management retains the right to modify this agreement on a temporary or permanent basis for any reason at any time.

The employee agrees to return company equipment and documents within five days of termination/separation of employment.

Employee signature: _____ Date: _____

Manager signature: _____ Date: _____

Fire Chief signature: _____ Date: _____