

Innovative Office

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Introduction

An effective work area is multifunctional and provides an employee with the tools and space to assist them in their work. Providing flexibility in the type of work space and work location assists the health unit in efficient delivery of programs, effective use of office space, contributes to workplace wellness and supports recommendations to improve health by incorporating healthy design concepts into the office built environment.

The Infrastructure Review Plan released in 2009 made a number of recommendations to be implemented that will lead the agency to a flexible work environment. One of the core recommendations was to implement “innovative officing” concepts that include desk-sharing, work from home, hotelling and touch down strategies.

Purpose

To maximize effective use of office space thereby improving service delivery and supporting a healthy work-life balance. Providing an innovative officing approach will result in changes to office design and be balanced with maintaining effective client/customer service. Innovative officing will allow for the employment of more people while maintaining the current footprint of an office. The innovative office concept and office courtesy guidelines apply to employees, volunteers and students (hereafter referred to as staff). The Work from Home program applies to employees only.

Legislative Authority

Occupational Health and Safety Act
 Income Tax Act
 Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1991
 Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004

Policy Definitions and Interpretations

Supervisor: Refers to the individual to whom the employee directly reports.

Clear Workstation: A work surface free of clutter and provides adequate work surface for shared use and is left in this condition whenever leaving the workstation at the end of the work day or for extended periods of time (ie. In meetings, absences).

Shared Work Space: More than one person is assigned to or uses one workstation. Shared workstations include Desk sharing, Hotelling desks and Touchdown areas.

Assigned Desk Sharing: Where more than one individual is assigned to one workstation. Desk sharing is conducive to part time individuals, individuals who do not work from their workstation all of the time and individuals participating in the Work from Home program.

Hotelling Desks: Workstations that are not permanently assigned and are available to be reserved on an as needed basis. These workstations are equipped with a varied technological setup to support the various needs of staff including laptops, tablets and desk top computer needs. Hotelling is conducive to individuals who need access to a workstation on an irregular basis, individuals who are desk sharing, do not work from the office/workstation all of their workday and/or individuals participating in the Work from Home program. Hotelling will also support students and visiting staff.

Touchdown Area: Available workstations or wireless workspace located at an office that is available on a first come, first serve basis and allows for overflow areas during peak demand times. A workstation that is unoccupied is considered available as a touchdown area and does not require a reservation. These work areas provide access to voicemail and email. Touchdown areas are conducive to individuals who have an assigned lap top/tablet and are travelling between offices or who work in the community and need workspace for a short period of time.

Assigned Workstation: One employee is assigned to one desk.

Work from Home Program: A voluntary, formal arrangement that supports an employee to work part of their work week from their home office.

Touch Down From Home: Employees are supported to begin and end their work day from home. This includes checking voice mail and for staff with home internet using web access to manage email.

Office Supplies: General purpose, consumable items which commonly have a shorter life span in use than equipment and machines and which are stocked for recurring use.

Policy

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (The Agency) is committed to moving all offices to an innovative office concept. An innovative office is a modern, multifaceted approach to work space design which maximizes effective use of office space through combined use of assigned workstations, assigned desk sharing, hotelling and touch down spaces. This concept is further enhanced by a voluntary Work from Home program. In addition, employees are encouraged to consider their activities for the day to minimize travel and time spent going into the office for the sole purpose of email and voicemail access when touching down from home is an option. This capability supports flexibility to begin and/or end the work day from home. All current employees, students and volunteers will be oriented to the policy as well as any new employees, students and volunteers as part of the agency orientation process. Management will be supported to receive professional development related to off-site supervision as needed.

Work from the Office:

Every employee is expected to spend time working in their assigned office. There are several types of work spaces available to support employees in carrying out their responsibilities. The specific work space for each individual employee is decided by the supervisor and takes into consideration the amount of time the employee spends in the office, the nature of the work while in the office, any accommodation requirements and the employee's FTE. An employee's work space in the office may be one or a combination of the following: assigned work station,

assigned desk sharing, a hotelling desk or touch down area. Employees may volunteer to work from a shared work space. All work spaces will be kept clear in order to support use of the space by other individuals. All offices will have secure, wireless connectivity to support mobility.

Shared Work Space:

The Agency will maintain a minimum of 25% of staff assigned to desk sharing. Management will determine the employees who will be assigned to desk share. The following criteria will be considered when determining staff who will desk share:

- ✓ Employees approved in Work from Home Program
- ✓ Full time and part time staff who spend a significant amount of time away from the office or workstation on a regular basis
- ✓ Staff whose days of work can be shifted
- ✓ There are no significant ergonomic challenges to sharing a workspace
- ✓ Staff who volunteer to participate
- ✓ Space constraints

Hotelling desks must be reserved.

Shared work spaces will provide one secure area for storing of personal possessions and work files.

Work from Home Program:

The Work from Home program is a voluntary process requiring management approval. The number of days working from home will be negotiated between the employee and their supervisor. Employees participating in the Work from Home program will not conduct health unit business with community partners or clients at the home office location. Work from Home participants can meet with other health unit employees in their home office setting. Participation in the Work from Home program does not prohibit the supervisor from requiring the employee to work from the assigned office for a period of time. Employees approved for participation in the Work from Home program will enter into a 12 month agreement.

Equipment Requirements:

All equipment, software and hardware supplied by the Agency will remain the property of the Agency and will be supported and/or maintained by the IT Team. Every effort will be made to limit duplication of equipment between the home office and health unit office. This will require the employee to transport some equipment (ie lap top, headset) between the two locations. Any equipment, software or hardware belonging to the Agency will be used for health unit business only.

The employer will provide the following equipment:

- Avaya phone and power supply
- Headset, if required and if not already deployed for use at the employee's assigned office
- Encrypted Laptop
- Monitor
- Cisco 871 router
- Software, mouse, keyboard, docking station

- Power surge bar
- Office supplies
- Carry case

The employee will provide the following:

- Private, segregated space for home office
- Workstation
- Locked storage for confidential files
- Adjustable chair
- Home phone (for 911 purpose)
- Fire extinguisher, first aid kit and smoke detector (all located within the home)
- Hard Wired High Speed Internet Service: Rogers Extreme or Bell Fiber 15/10 and associated wiring

Technical Support:

The employee will receive an orientation to equipment set up from an IT representative. The employee is responsible for set up of equipment at the home office. Internet provider technical difficulties require the employee to follow up with their internet provider. The Helpdesk ticket system will be used for any set up or regular, ongoing technical issues.

In the event of a work disruption at the employee's home office (including WFH equipment trouble shooting) for more than 60 minutes, staff must report this to their supervisor and may be required to travel to the nearest office to continue working.

Evaluation:

Employee participation in the Work from Home Program is subject to ongoing review by the supervisor. There will be a six month review of any new participant in the program. At a minimum, the supervisor will complete an annual review of the employee's participation in the Work from Home program. A satisfactory review will result in continuation in the program for another year.

Termination of Participation:

The Director has the authority to end an employee's participation in the Work from Home program if it is deemed unsatisfactory by the supervisor based on the defined evaluation criteria or the arrangement is no longer supporting the program team as needed. The employee may also identify the discontinuation of their participation in the program where the employee does not feel the arrangement is satisfactory. Either party wishing to end participation in the program must provide a minimum of 4 weeks written notice.

Travel:

The Travel Reimbursement Policy will apply. This application supports equity for all employees and does not negatively impact the cost of travel for the organization. Human Resources will link with all managers of approved work from home participants to discuss how this policy will be applied to mileage claims and some of the potential anomalies in application based on the fact that these individuals have their home as an assigned work location.

Procedures

Work From Home Program:

1. Employee will meet with their supervisor to discuss their interest in volunteering to participate in the Work from Home program.
2. The supervisor will indicate whether or not the employee is supported to begin the process
3. If supported, the employee submits a helpdesk ticket for technical consultation to ensure their home IT requirements are suitable. The helpdesk request should reference "Work from Home program technical consultation request".
4. The IT representative contacts the employee to arrange a consultation to complete the Home Office Technical Checklist within two weeks of receiving the request.
5. If the technical requirements are not satisfactory, the employee will not be permitted to continue in the process and the IT representative will forward the completed Home Office Technical Checklist to the employee's supervisor.
6. If the technical requirements are satisfactory, the employee completes the employee portion of the Employee/Supervisor Assessment form (ESA) and submits the form (ESA) and Home Office Assessment Checklist (HOA) along with the Technical Checklist (TC) to their supervisor.
7. The supervisor reviews all forms and completes the supervisor portion of the ESA form within one week of receiving and forwards the HOA Checklist to Human Resources.
8. If the supervisor disagrees with the employee portion of the ESA form or has concerns that the HOA Checklist is unsatisfactory, the supervisor will meet with the employee to indicate that continuation in the process is not supported and forwards all documentation to Human Resources for filing in the employee's personnel file.
9. Once Human Resources receives the HOA Checklist from the supervisor authorizing support to move forward, Human Resources will assign a Certified Health and Safety Representative to contact the employee to arrange for a home assessment and forward the HOA Checklist to the Certified Health and Safety Representative to complete. A home office assessment should occur no later than three weeks after the HOA Checklist is received in Human Resources.
10. After completing the home office assessment, the Certified Health and Safety Representative forwards the completed HOA Checklist to the supervisor.
11. The supervisor must ensure that all items on the HOA checklist have been completed before making recommendation for approval for participation in the program.
12. The supervisor will proceed with completion of the Employee Criteria Evaluation form within two weeks of receipt of the HOA Checklist and forwards all documentation to the Director for final approval.
13. The Director should provide their decision regarding participation in the Work from Home Program within one week of receiving the documentation from the supervisor and forwards all completed documentation back to the supervisor.
14. The supervisor informs the employee of the decision and forwards all documentation to the Administrative Coordinator for initiation of the Work from Home Agreement.
15. The Administrative Coordinator will prepare and then forward the Work from Home Agreement to the employee for signing. Once signed by the employee, the Administrative Coordinator will forward to the Director for signing.

16. The Administrative Coordinator will forward a copy of the signed Work from Home Agreement to the employee and retain one copy in the Service. All original documentation is then forwarded to Human Resources where the information will be placed in the employee's personnel file.
17. The Administrative Coordinator notifies helpdesk of the approved Work from Home Program participant for the purpose of deploying equipment.
18. IT contacts the employee to determine when the employee can pick up the IT equipment and receive orientation to the equipment set up.
19. The supervisor will complete the Participant Review form on a participant who is new to the program and has been working from home for a period of a six months. Further, a satisfactory Participant Review form is required on an annual basis (to be completed on or before the end of the Agreement period). This review must be completed in order to renew the Work from Home Agreement for a new one year period. The Participant Review will be filed in the employee's personnel file.
20. Any changes to the days of work in either the home office or the assigned office will require an updated Agreement signed by both the employee and Director (follow steps 14-16).
21. The annual review will require the employee to complete an updated Technical Checklist and Home Office Assessment Checklist.
22. The employee forwards the completed Technical Checklist and Home Office Assessment Checklist to their supervisor.
23. The supervisor forwards the Home Office Assessment Checklist to Human Resources to arrange for a Certified Health and Safety Representative to complete the home assessment (refer to Steps 9-11).
24. The supervisor forwards the completed Participant Review form to the Director (refer to steps 13-16).
25. If the employee does not wish to renew the Work from Home Agreement, they will notify their supervisor and provide the reason(s) for discontinuation in the program.
26. The supervisor will forward the employee's notice of discontinuation in the Work from Home program to Director.
27. The Director confirms in writing the end date of the employee's participation in the Work from Home Program and provides a copy to IT and Human Resources.
28. When an employee discontinues participation in the Work from Home program, all Agency-owned equipment will be returned to IT on the employee's next regular work day.
29. IT will ensure all health unit equipment provided to the employee at the onset of participation in the program is returned.
30. An employee leaving the employ of the health unit or on extended leave who is a participant in the Work from Home program will return all Agency-owned equipment to IT on or before their last day of work.
31. Human Resources will maintain the Agency master list of employees participating in the Work from Home Program.

Office Courtesy Guidelines

Introduction

Working with colleagues in close proximity and using shared work space requires respectful attitudes and actions. Demonstrating respect for your fellow colleagues in the workplace helps build a positive work environment which fosters work place wellness.

Guidelines:

- Maintain a clear workstation
- When using a shared work space, disinfect the work space and equipment before beginning work
- Avoid leaving any personal items at a shared work space.
- Cancel your hotelling desk reservation if you no longer need the work space
- Employees sharing a workstation will negotiate what personal décor they have on their desk; however, personal décor should be kept to a minimum.
- Be conscientious of your colleague's right to privacy. When approaching a work area, knock gently or quietly greet the individual to ask permission before interrupting or entering.
- Use a quiet voice when speaking to a colleague in a shared work space area. Whether business or casual conversation be aware of the potential of your conversation to disrupt others and move to a more appropriate space if the conversation will carry on beyond a few minutes. If you have to raise your voice to be heard, you need to move closer to the colleague you're speaking to.
- Be aware of conduct or desk décor that may be offensive to others.
- Avoid interjections into conversations which you are not directly involved.
- Maintain confidentiality standards related to all conversations and information.
- Refrain from use of radios. Portable audio players are permitted provided they do not impair ability to carry out work functions.
- Ask your colleague(s) if they mind, before opening or closing a blind or window.
- Ask before borrowing your colleague's personal equipment and supplies. Do not open another colleague's desk drawer without permission.
- Refrain from taking group breaks in a workspace area where fellow colleagues are trying to work.
- Avoid the use of heavy scents.
- When away from your desk utilize the "send all calls" option on your telephone and log out of your computer.
- Ensure cell phones are on vibrate.
- Avoid using speaker phone when colleagues are within distance to be disturbed by your call.

- Teleconferencing/webcasting should be conducted from a private work space (ie meeting room) or if done at a workstation, a headset must be used.
- Whenever possible, employees, students and volunteers are encouraged to problem solve any conflicts with their colleagues before proceeding to their supervisor for assistance.

Forms

Related Guidelines

Hotel Workstation Guideline

Related Policies

- IM0101 Personal Information Including Personal Health Information Privacy – Principles
- IM0102 Personal Information Including Personal Health Information Privacy – Accountability
- IM0103 Personal Information Including Personal Health Information Privacy – Consent
- IM0104 Personal Information Including Personal Health Information Privacy – Collection & Use
- IM0105 Personal Information Including Personal Health Information Privacy – Disclosure
- IM0106 Personal Information Including Personal Health Information Privacy – Access
- IM0107 Personal Information Including Personal Health Information Privacy – Correction
- IM0108 Personal Information Including Personal Health Information Privacy – Privacy Breach
- TQ0107 Use of Portable Electronic Storage Devices
- TQ0101 Acceptable Use Policy Records Management
- TQ0104 Remote Access to Agency Network
- FI0101 Travel Reimbursement (requires review)
- OP0106 Alternate Worksite Policy (requires review)
- TQ0103 Email and Voicemail Access from Home (requires review)
- HR0105 Performance Review Policy

Final Approval Signature: _____

Review/Revision History:

- Revised – April 24, 2013
- Revised – August 10, 2011

Appendix A Parameters for use of Visiting Manager's Offices

Background

For the purpose of this document, the term 'visiting manager' will refer to a visiting manager supervisor or director.

Visiting Manager's Offices (VMO's) have been established in health unit offices to support the presence of a visiting manager, director or supervisor in an office to engage with and supervise staff and to provide a quiet and confidential work space for visiting managers to carry out management functions. As a secondary function, the VMO's, when not in use by a visiting manager, can be utilized as a small meeting space for program staff.

Booking Process

Booking by Visiting Managers: The VMO must be booked through the office Program Assistant. A visiting manager may book the VMO in advance; however, similar to a hotel station, the VMO should only be booked for the date and time that the visiting manager intends to work in the office.

Booking by Staff: The VMO is available for use by staff only when not in use by a visiting manager. Although staff may book the VMO in advance, a visiting manager's request will supersede a staff booking. Program Assistants are responsible for informing a staff member if their booking has been cancelled.

Considerations:

- The visiting manager is not obligated to use the VMO if another available work station (ie hotel station) is suitable to their needs.
- The visiting manager should try to be reasonable and flexible in accommodating staff booking of the VMO by utilizing other available work stations if possible.