

## **Work from Home Policy**

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### **Introduction**

Providing flexibility in work locations assists the health unit in efficient delivery of programs, effective use of office space and contributes to workplace wellness and work-life balance.

The Infrastructure Review Plan released in 2009 made a number of recommendations that have been implemented and have led the Agency to a flexible work environment. One of the core recommendations was to implement a work from home strategy in order to reduce our office footprint and maximize efficient use of office space.

### **Purpose**

To maximize effective use of office space thereby improving service delivery and supporting a healthy workplace and work-life balance. Providing a work from home approach will result in changes to office design and be balanced with maintaining effective client/customer service. The Work from Home Program applies to permanent 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 Interpretation**

**ESA:** Employee Supervisor Assessment

**HOA:** Home Office Assessment Checklist

**HOTC:** Home Office Technical Checklist

**HR:** Human Resources

**Supervisor:** The person to whom the employee directly reports (may be a Supervisor, Manager, Director or the Medical Officer of Health).

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

**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) has been committed to an innovative office concept since the release of our Infrastructure Review Plan in 2009. Our voluntary Work from Home Program enhances this concept. 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.

The Work from Home Program is a voluntary arrangement requiring management approval. Every employee is expected to spend time working in their assigned office. 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. The specific work space for each employee is decided by the supervisor in accordance with the criteria stated in the Innovative Office Policy (OP0108). 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;
- can meet with other health unit employees in their home office setting;
- may be required by their supervisor to work from their assigned office for a period of time or to adjust their work from home days to accommodate program requirements;
- may end participation in the Program or participation may be ended by the employer (see Procedures, Termination of Participation in the Work from Home Program).

### ***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 (i.e. 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:

- Agency phone and power supply
- Headset, if required and if not already deployed for use at the employee's assigned office
- Encrypted Laptop
- Monitor
- Printer (upon written authorization from supervisor)
- 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
- Land line home phone (for 911 purpose). If only a cell phone is maintained (and no land line) written confirmation must be provided from the cell phone carrier confirming that Enhanced 911 service is in place for the employee.
- Fire extinguisher, first aid kit and smoke detector (all located within the home)
- High Speed Internet Service which may include the purchase of a wireless turbo hub with confirmed minimum upload/download speed, as determined by IT, currently 10/3 Mbit/s.

***Optional SMDHU/Rogers Wireless Turbo HUB Program (with unlimited internet usage):***

*What is a Wireless Turbo Hub?*

While the Health Unit works with Rogers as our vendor of record, we are able to offer approved Work from Home staff participation in the optional SMDHU/Rogers Wireless Turbo Hub Program. Provided you have purchased a wireless Turbo Hub from Rogers, the Program provides the necessary minimum upload/download speed as required by IT for Work from Home participation, as well as unlimited high speed internet, for \$50.00 per month, payable by the employee to the Agency via payroll deduction. The price is subject to change and should Rogers no longer be our vendor of record, the Program will be discontinued. Participating employees are required to sign the SMDHU/Rogers Wireless Turbo HUB Program payroll deduction authorization and terms and conditions form.

*Why would someone need a Wireless Turbo Hub?*

1. If you do not have cabled high speed internet then you have wireless internet which acts as a modem to pull in the high speed. While unlimited internet is not required for participation in the Work from Home Program, should you purchase the hub yourself (through Bell or Rogers) you may pay \$145/month for only 100 Gbps (at August 2017).
2. If you live in an area that is not served by cabled high speed internet (such as a rural area), which is required to participate in the Work from Home Program, the Rogers Hub will provide you with the required speed (demonstrated through Agency trials with the Rogers Hub).

***Technical Support:***

Participating employees will receive an orientation to setting up equipment for their home from an IT representative. The employee is responsible for set up of equipment at their 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. Internet difficulties for those employees participating in the Optional SMDHU/Rogers Wireless Turbo HUB Program must also be reported through the Helpdesk ticket system.

In the event of a work disruption at the employee's home office (including Work from Home equipment troubleshooting) 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.

***Participant Review:***

Employee participation in the Work from Home Program is subject to ongoing review by the supervisor. The supervisor may complete a review of the employee's participation in the Program at any time. However the review is to be formally done every three years, ideally during each three year Performance Review. A satisfactory review of the Work from Home Program by the supervisor will result in continuation in the Program.

A review of participation will also occur if there is a change in program, position or reporting supervisor. However, the reporting supervisor may defer review until the next Performance Review date or another date as determined by the supervisor.

***Termination of Participation:***

The supervisor has the authority to end an employee's participation in the Work from Home Program if any of the evaluation criteria as shown on the Participant Review form is less than satisfactory or the arrangement is no longer supporting the program as needed. The employee may also end their participation in the Program where they do not feel the arrangement is satisfactory. Either party wishing to end participation in the Program must provide a minimum of four weeks' written notice.

***Travel:***

The Travel Conservation and Reimbursement Policy will apply to participants in the Work from Home Program, however, it should not negatively impact the cost of travel for the organization. HR is available 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***

**For A New Work from Home Participant:**

1. Employees require a minimum of one year of service with the Agency to participate in this Program.
2. The employee will discuss with their supervisor their interest in volunteering to participate in the Work from Home Program.
3. The supervisor will indicate whether or not the employee is supported to begin the process and the parameters around how many days and what days are to be designated Work from Home days. If supported, the supervisor will provide email confirmation to the employee.
4. If supported, the employee provides the email confirmation of support from the supervisor with 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".
5. An IT representative will contact the employee to arrange a consultation to complete the Home Office Technical Checklist (HOTC) within two weeks of receiving the request.

6. 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 HOTC to the employee's supervisor.
7. If the technical requirements are satisfactory, the employee completes their portion of the Employee/Supervisor Assessment (ESA) and the Home Office Assessment Checklist (HOA) and submits both documents to their supervisor.
8. The supervisor reviews all forms and completes the supervisor portion of the ESA and Step 2 of the HOA within one week of receiving and forwards the HOA to HR.
9. If the supervisor disagrees with the employee portion of the ESA form or has concerns that the HOA is unsatisfactory, the supervisor will meet with the employee to indicate that continuation in the process is not supported and forwards all documentation to HR for filing in the employee's employment file.
10. Once HR receives the HOA from the supervisor authorizing support to move forward, HR will assign a Certified Health and Safety Representative to contact the employee to arrange for a home assessment and forwards the HOA to the Certified Health and Safety Representative to complete. A home office assessment should occur no later than three weeks after the HOA is received in HR.
11. After completing the home office assessment, the Certified Health and Safety Representative forwards the completed HOA to the supervisor.
12. The supervisor must ensure that all items on the HOA have been completed and proceeds with final approval for participation, within two weeks of receiving the completed HOA.
13. The supervisor informs the employee of the decision and forwards all documentation to the Administrative Coordinator for initiation of the Work from Home Program Agreement.
14. The Administrative Coordinator will prepare and then forward the Work from Home Program Agreement to the employee for signing and return to the Administrative Coordinator. The Administrative Coordinator will forward the signed Agreement to the supervisor for signing and return of the fully signed Agreement to the Administrative Coordinator.
15. The Administrative Coordinator will forward a copy of the fully signed Work from Home Agreement to the employee and retain one copy in the Department as needed. All original documentation and an electronic version of the Agreement is then forwarded to HR where the information will be placed in the employee's employment file and recorded for tracking purposes in HR.
16. The Administrative Coordinator notifies the helpdesk via email of the approved Work from Home Program participant for the purpose of deploying equipment.
17. IT contacts the employee to determine when the employee can pick up the IT equipment and receive orientation to the equipment set up.
18. Summary of Documentation Required for a New Participant:
  - Home Office Technical Checklist (HOTC)
  - Employee/Supervisor Assessment (ESA)
  - Home Office Assessment Checklist (HOA)

- Work from Home Program Agreement

**Current Work from Home Participant going on Extended Leave or to a Temporary Ineligible Work from Home Assignment:**

1. An extended leave from work (including sick leave, maternity leave, etc.) or a temporary ineligible Work from Home assignment is defined as a period of four months or greater. A temporary withdrawal of the employee's participation in the Work from Home Program will occur for the period that the employee is not working in their Work from Home eligible position.
2. As soon as it has been confirmed that an employee will be taking an extended leave from work or they will be temporarily moving to a position that is not eligible for the Program, the supervisor who has managed the employee in the Program will send written notification of temporary withdrawal with the effective date and the anticipated date of return to the Program to HR and IT.
3. The supervisor advises the employee of the temporary withdrawal and the requirement to return all Agency owned equipment.
4. All Agency owned equipment must be returned to IT on or before the effective date of the temporary withdrawal. Once all equipment has been returned, IT will send a confirmation email to HR.
5. Upon the employee's return to their Work from Home eligible position, the supervisor will discuss continuing participation with the employee. If reinstatement is required, the Work from Home Program Review process should be initiated.
6. Summary of Documentation Required for Extended Leave or Temporary Ineligible Work Assignment:
  - Written and/or email authorizations and notifications

**Changes to a Current Work from Home Program Agreement:**

1. If there is a *permanent change to assigned office and/or home office work days*, a revised agreement is required.
2. The supervisor provides their approval of the required changes to the agreement to the employee and to the Administrative Coordinator, via email, within one week of notification of the change, for initiation of a Revised Work from Home Program Agreement.
3. The Administrative Coordinator will prepare and then forward the Revised Work from Home Program Agreement to the employee for signing and return to the Administrative Coordinator. The Administrative Coordinator will forward the signed Agreement to the supervisor for signing and return of the fully signed Agreement to the Administrative Coordinator.
4. The Administrative Coordinator will forward a copy of the fully signed Revised Work from Home Program Agreement to the employee and retain one copy in the Department if required. All original documentation and an electronic version of the Revised Agreement is then sent to HR where the information will be placed in the employee's employment file and recorded for tracking purposes in HR.

5. Summary of Documents Required for Changes to a Current Work from Home Agreement with a change in work days:
  - Written or Email Notifications and authorizations
  - Revised Work from Home Program Agreement
6. If there is a planned move of the home office within the home or there will be a home address change the employee will notify their supervisor in writing specifically referencing their Work from Home Program participation.
7. In this case the Work from Home Program Review process should be initiated.

**Work from Home Program Review:**

1. At any time, the supervisor may review the employee's participation in the Work from Home Program. However, every 3 years, the supervisor must initiate a review of participation in the Program for participants who report to them. Documentation must be completed prior to the end date of the current agreement. A satisfactory Participant Review must be indicated in order for the employee to continue in the Work from Home Program.
2. The supervisor asks the employee to complete the Participant Review and send it to them. If the employee indicates on the Participant Review form that there have been no changes to the most recently completed HOTC and HOA, the Participant Review form is the only form that requires completion in the review process. If the employee indicates on the Participant Review form that there have been changes to the most recently completed HOTC and/or HOA, then the appropriate form must also be completed following the applicable steps in "For a New Participant" above.
3. Within two weeks of receipt of the completed Participant Review, the supervisor completes the management sections of the form. The supervisor meets with the employee to discuss the evaluation.
4. The supervisor informs the employee of their decision and sends a request to the Administrative Coordinator for initiation of the Renewal Work from Home Agreement.
5. The Administrative Coordinator will prepare and then forward the Renewal Work from Home Program Agreement to the employee for signing. Once signed by the employee, the Administrative Coordinator will forward to the supervisor for signing and return of the fully signed Agreement to the Administrative Coordinator.
6. The Administrative Coordinator forwards a copy of the fully signed Renewal Work from Home Program Agreement to the employee and retains one copy in the Department as needed. All original documentation and an electronic version of the Renewal Agreement is then sent to HR where the information will be placed in the employee's employment file and recorded for tracking purposes in HR.
7. If the employee does not wish to renew the Work from Home Agreement, proceed with Termination of Participation in the Work from Home Program.
8. Summary of Documents Required for Renewal:
  - Participant Review
  - Renewal Agreement

- Home Office Technical Checklist (HOTC) (as required)
- Home Office Assessment Checklist (HOA) (as required)

**Termination of Participation in the Work from Home Program:**

1. As per the Work from Home Program and Agreement, this arrangement may be terminated by either party. The employee or the employer must provide four weeks' notice in advance of the termination date. Notwithstanding, a Work from Home Program Agreement will be terminated if:
  - employment ends;
  - there is a permanent move to a non-eligible Work from Home position;
  - the Work from Home Program arrangement is no longer of mutual benefit;
  - if there is a change in program, position or reporting manager, participation may be reviewed or terminated, dependent upon specific circumstance;
  - home office internet service no longer meets the required high speed internet requirements as determined by IT.
2. If the employee wishes to terminate the Agreement, they will notify their supervisor in writing and provide the reason(s) for discontinuation in the Program.
3. The supervisor advises HR via email of the end date of the employee's participation in the Program, including the reason for ending Program participation.
4. The supervisor sends IT the end date for Program participation.
5. When an employee discontinues participation in the Work from Home Program, all Agency owned equipment will be returned to IT on the effective date of the end of the participation in the Work from Home Program or the employee's next regular work day. IT will ensure all health unit equipment provided to the employee is returned and will advise HR via email once all equipment has been returned.
6. When the Agency discontinues an employee's participation in the Work from Home Program, all Agency owned equipment will be returned to IT no later than the end of the participation in the Work from Home Program. IT will ensure all health unit equipment provided to the employee is returned and will advise HR via email once all equipment has been returned.
7. HR will place all documentation in the employee's employment file and will record the termination of participation for tracking purposes in HR.
8. Summary of Documents Required for Termination of Participation in the Program:
  - Written or Email Notifications or Authorizations

HR will maintain the Agency master list of employees participating in the Work from Home Program.

HR will monitor the Program to confirm that up-to-date documentation is on file and is recorded in HR. Reminders will be sent to supervisors regarding outstanding or upcoming actions for the Program that they should be made aware of.



***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
- OP0108 Innovative Office
- TQ0107 Use of Portable Electronic Storage Devices
- TQ0101 Acceptable Use Policy Records Management
- TQ0104 Remote Access to Agency Network
- FI0101 Travel Conservation & Reimbursement (requires review)
- OP0106 Alternate Worksite Policy (requires review)
- TQ0103 Email and Voicemail Access from Home (requires review)
- HR0105 Performance Review Policy
- HS0119 Cleaning and Disinfection of Non-Critical Multi-Use Device/Equipment

***Related Forms***

- OP0110(F1) Work from Home Program – Home Office Technical Checklist
- OP0110(F2) Work from Home Program – Employee/Supervisor Assessment
- OP0110(F3) Work from Home Program – Home Office Assessment Checklist
- OP0110(F4) Work from Home Program Agreement
- OP0110(F5) Work from Home Program – Participant Review
- OP0110(F6) SMDHU/Rogers Wireless Turbo HUB Program Employee Payroll Deduction Authorization

***Final Approval Signature:*** \_\_\_\_\_

Review/Revision History: