

Remote Access to Agency Network

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Introduction

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit is committed to implementing systems and processes that will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our service delivery and where possible improve working conditions for health unit employees. The ability to access electronic databases, electronic files, and email from a location other than a health unit office can enhance service delivery and timely communication with clients and partners. However, it also introduces a level of risk to our information and communication systems that must be understood and managed.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to inform Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit Board of Health members, employees, students and volunteers of the parameters for accessing the health unit network files, databases and email outside of the health unit office. This includes the requirements for ensuring the security of agency systems and information and the appropriate management of agency records.

Legislative Authority

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1991
Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004

Policy Definitions and Interpretation

This policy is to be interpreted within the context of the agency policies and framework for information privacy, professional practice, records management and acceptable use of technology.

For the purposes of this policy “home” can be read to mean an alternate location that is not a health unit office including hotel.

Policy

Access to the agency network and IT systems including access to network files, databases, the Internet and email is a privilege and not a right of employment.

Executive Committee approves access to agency network files, databases and the Internet from a location that is not a health unit office for the following groups of employees: Medical Officer of Health, Associate Medical Officers of Health, Directors, Managers, Supervisors, On Call Personnel, Information Technology personnel, Administrative Coordinators, Administrative Assistants and Executive Assistant, Consultants/Coordinators/Specialists (Appendix A).

A member of Executive Committee may approve access to the agency network files, databases and the Internet from a location that is not a health unit office for an employee for specified periods of time in response to the need for accommodation.

The employee assumes responsibility for the costs of the equipment and connections required to support this access. Management reserves the right to restrict access at its discretion.

A member of Executive Committee may approve remote access for specified positions or functions and the agency may provide the equipment and connections required for access to agency networks, systems and the Internet from an external site. Parameters, expectations and/or restrictions regarding access and use in addition to those detailed within this policy may be established by the Service Director or designate to address these unique situations. Access granted for work purposes to conduct the normal course of business from an alternate location (e.g. schools) does not confer rights of access from home.

All agency policies regarding systems access, acceptable use, information privacy and records management will apply to employees working from an alternate location.

Documents created or downloaded to a system hard-drive (computer, laptop, tablet, palm, blackberry, etc.) while working on behalf of the agency, whether the equipment is owned by the agency or the individual, will be considered agency information. These documents will be considered transitory records and will be managed in accordance with agency policy and standards for information privacy and records management.

All existing terms and conditions of employment and provisions of the collective agreement will continue to operate when an employee is working off site.

With respect to business travel, employees who access agency systems from home will not be reimbursed for mileage or accumulate time when:

- they travel from their home to their assigned office location or first site of service delivery (if the distance or time required to travel is less than or equal to the distance to their assigned office)
- they travel home from the last site of service delivery (if the distance or time required to travel is less than or equal to the distance to their assigned office).

Where the distance to or from a worksite from home is greater than the distance to the assigned office, the difference (total travel distance or time required to travel to the worksite minus travel distance or time required to travel from home to assigned office) may be claimed.

Procedures

A. Systems Access:

1. Request for access to agency network files and databases from a location that is not a health unit office will be initiated by the Administrative Coordinator upon the direction of the Director or designate through the IT Move, Adds, Changes (MAC) process.
2. Requests will be processed by IT in accordance with the parameters established by Executive Committee noted above.
3. Supervisors/Managers/Directors will orient employees to the policies and standards that apply to them when working from a location that is not a health unit office.

B. Withdrawal of Access to Email from Home:

1. Requests for restrictions to access will be initiated by the Administrative Coordinator upon the direction of the director or designate through the IT Move, Adds, Changes (MAC) as a high priority.
2. IT will process these requests within one business day.
3. Supervisors/Managers/Directors will communicate changes in access to their employees.

Related Policies

- Policy IM0101 Personal Information Including Personal Health Information Privacy – Principles
- Policy IM0102 Personal Information Including Personal Health Information Privacy – Accountability
- Policy IM0103 Personal Information Including Personal Health Information Privacy – Consent
- Policy IM0104 Personal Information Including Personal Health Information Privacy – Collection & Use
- Policy IM0105 Personal Information Including Personal Health Information Privacy – Disclosure
- Policy IM0106 Personal Information Including Personal Health Information Privacy – Access
- Policy IM0107 Personal Information Including Personal Health Information Privacy – Correction
- Policy IM0108 Personal Information Including Personal Health Information Privacy – Privacy Breach
- Policy OP0106 Alternate Worksite Policy
- Policy TQ0107 Use of Portable Electronic Storage Devices
- Policy TQ0101 Acceptable Use Policy
- Policy IM0110 Records Management
- Policy TQ0103 Email and Voicemail Access from Home

Final Approval Signature: _____

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