

Telework Arrangements

Objective:	To allow employees the flexibility to work from home, provided there will be no adverse effect on County operations.	Policy/Procedure Number:	03-21
Reference: <i>(All applicable federal, state, and local laws)</i>	U.S. Department of Labor, Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA); Tompkins County Collective Bargaining Agreements; NYS Civil Service Law; NYS Workers Compensation Law	Effective Date:	July 7, 2020
Legislative Policy Statement:	Tompkins County recognizes that our diverse work force may, at times, have needs that require creative approaches to helping employees balance work and life demands. This policy is provided as one tool to use in recruitment and retention of a diverse and talented workforce, ensure we meet our commitments to the public we serve, increase workplace flexibility, improve morale and productivity among employees, reduce costs, and reduce commuter stress and carbon footprint. The County encourages management to consider non-traditional work arrangements that will enable employees to balance work and life demands while maintaining or enhancing the department's ability to meet and/or exceed expectations.	Responsible Department:	Human Resources
		Modified Date (s):	June 7, 2022
		Resolution No.:	2020-118; 2022-106
		Next Scheduled Review:	June 2027

General Information: Telework is one of many alternative work arrangements between an employee and employer which can be productive for both and those they serve. A telework arrangement is not always appropriate for all employees, departments, or positions. No employee is entitled to or guaranteed the opportunity to work from home. Telework arrangements are based on the discretion of the employee's Department Head. All arrangements must meet the criteria within this policy. This policy does not apply in relation to employees who are seeking a reasonable accommodation due to an individual or medical status. As such, the two procedures should not be considered the same and the review process is also to be viewed as separate and distinct. Employees seeking a reasonable accommodation must continue to complete the paperwork associated with the Reasonable Accommodations Policy 02-44.

I. Definitions: **Alternative Work Arrangement** - Work structures that alter the time and/or place that work gets done on a regular basis. This may include flexibility in the place of work such as working from home or in the scheduling of hours worked, such as flexible work hours or compressed work weeks.

Designated County Worksite - An employee's primary workspace where the employee normally performs work duties located within a County department and/or located on County property.

Ergonomic Workspace - An office or other workspace designed in a way intended to minimize employee health risks and increase employee productivity, thus reducing employer costs. In an office setting, this practice may involve creating a user-friendly workspace layout as well as introducing furniture and equipment designed to offer optimal bodily support.

Telework - A work arrangement in which an employee does not commute or travel to their designated County worksite. This arrangement allows an employee to be scheduled to work from a designated telework site at least one (1) day per work week on a recurring basis.

II. Policy:

- A. Department Heads reserve the right to implement telework arrangements, where appropriate for *eligible* employees in recognition of the positive personal and business impacts of such arrangements, for reasons including reduced costs, commuter stress and carbon footprint, and increased workplace flexibility. Notice of such arrangements and copies of all documentation must be provided to the Department of Human Resources for placement in the employee's personnel file.
- B. An employee's participation in a telework arrangement is strictly voluntary. It is prohibited for an employee to be forced into such arrangements. Telework arrangements may be terminated at any time by either the employee or by their Department Head in accordance with Section III.F of this policy.
- C. Telework arrangements will be made for a predetermined period of time not to exceed six (6) months and can only be renewed by mutual agreement of the Department Head and the employee. Employees may not utilize alternative work arrangements (telework/flex work hours/compressed work week) more than three (3) days per week and must be available for regular scheduled hours during such time. If not available due to illness or personal reasons, employee must utilize fringe time as they would if working on-site at primary work location. Approved telework days should not be substituted without approval of Department Head.
- D. Employees will maintain the confidentiality of all information and documents, prevent unauthorized access to any County system, not use their own personal computer equipment and dispose of work-related documents in a manner that will not jeopardize the interests of the County or the public we serve.
- E. Employees will maintain a safe, ergonomic telework space (*See Appendix D*) and environment to avoid causing injury to self or others.
- F. Duties, obligations, and responsibilities of an employee who telecommutes are the same as when working on-site in their department. Employees are subject to the same policies and procedures as that of employees at their designated County worksite. These arrangements do not change the basic terms and conditions of the employee's employment.
- G. Telework performance reviews shall be completed by Department Heads as necessary per departmental policy, but no less frequently than once within the first three (3) months of the telework arrangement. The employee's position should have clearly defined and easily measurable or quantifiable tasks. Employees shall maintain weekly work logs (*Appendix C*) and provide such logs as requested by their Department Head.
- H. Employees engaged in a telework arrangement will continue to accrue applicable fringe benefits (vacation, personal, sick, holiday, compensatory, disability) at the same rate as an employee who is not engaged in a telework arrangement. An employee's salary, retirement, and benefits will remain as if they were working without special arrangements. Development and training opportunities will be offered in the same manner as those not engaged in a telework arrangement.
- I. Employees engaged in telework are required to take rest and meal breaks per NYS Labor Laws and applicable collective bargaining agreements.

- J.** Employees shall not conduct any unauthorized external (non-County) work during their telework schedule. A telework arrangement shall not be used to work another job or run a personal business.
- K.** Telework shall not be a substitute or replacement for dependent or childcare. Employees who work from home are expected to make dependent and childcare arrangements for the period they will be working at home. Though the employee's schedule may be adjusted to meet emergency needs, the focus of the telework arrangement must remain on job performance and meeting the objectives of the employer-employee agreement.
- L.** Employees shall not hold in-person business meetings with internal or external clients, customers, or colleagues at their telework site. Employees are liable for any injuries sustained by visitors.
- M.** Tompkins County is not responsible for purchasing or reimbursing employees for any telework expenses, including but not limited to, cost of home maintenance, cost of internet and telephone services or use, electricity, heating or cooling costs, office furniture, or office supplies and equipment that normally can be provided by the County or their department.
- N.** There shall be no additional pay for telework, nor shall mileage be paid or reimbursed for transportation between an employee's telework site and the employee's designated County worksite.
- O.** As specialized material or equipment may be needed in order to work from a telework site for certain positions, the County may provide such equipment (hardware and software) and services (such as technical support) with approval from the applicable Department Head. This may consist of a computer or laptop, modem, scanner, and related supplies. The County will provide routine maintenance and repairs for County equipment, as needed. The employee must sign to acknowledge receipt of county provided equipment and agree to take appropriate actions to protect the items from damage or theft. Upon termination of the telework agreement or separation from County employment, the employee must return the equipment to the Department within five (5) days of the effective date. Failure to do so may be subject to recovery or legal actions.
- P.** The County shall not provide tax guidance, nor will the County assume any additional tax liabilities on behalf of telework employees working out of a home-based office. The responsibilities for fulfilling all obligations under IRS, state and local government laws and/or restrictions rest solely with the employee.
- Q.** The County assumes no liability for injuries occurring at an employee's telework site outside of their prearranged telework schedule. During telework hours, an employee is covered for any injury arising in the course of employment pursuant to NYS Workers Compensation laws. The County will not be liable for any loss, damage, destruction to property or for any injury or loss to third persons, including family members, occurring at or around the employee's approved telework site.

III. Procedure:

A. Eligibility

An employee requesting a telework arrangement must meet the following criteria:

Note: Exceptions may be made for new hires at the discretion of the Department Head.

1. An employee's telework location must be located in New York State and within 165 miles of Ithaca, NY.
2. The employee must be performing currently at an overall satisfactory level in their current position.
3. Employees who have received formal disciplinary action within one (1) year prior to the proposed telework arrangement start date may be deemed ineligible for telework arrangements. Ineligibility shall be at the discretion of the Department Head.. Such ineligibility shall be dependent upon the offense that resulted in disciplinary action.
4. An employee's work must be of a nature that the time needed for face-to-face interaction with internal or external customers is minimal, requires minimal supervision, does not cause an unnecessary burden on co-workers and other County departments, has a limited impact on the public, and allows for the employee's daily tasks to be performed successfully away from the employee's designated County worksite .
5. Employees must have demonstrated professional work standards which include a demonstrated conscientiousness about work time and productivity, self-motivation, self-discipline, ability to work well alone, operate computer or other equipment independently, and communicate effectively with supervisors, co-workers, support staff, customers and/or clients.
6. Employees interested in a telework arrangement, should have an ergonomically appropriate home office environment similar to that of their County office workspace and the primary materials and equipment (telephone, internet, desk, chair, County issued laptop, and general office supplies) needed at their telework site prior to the start date of their telework schedule. Employees who require adjustments to meet these requirements are responsible for any costs related to remodeling and the initial setup of the designated telework site with the exception of a laptop and general office supplies that may be provided by the County, when appropriate.
7. Telework arrangements are not transferrable to other positions. An employee must submit a new request if their position changes if they wish to continue to telework. Prior to submitting the new request, an employee must have received a successful evaluation for the existing arrangement.

B. Requesting Arrangements

1. Employees wishing to request a telework arrangement shall submit a *Request for Telework Arrangements (Appendix A)* form to their Department Head.

2. After the *Request for Telework Arrangements* form has been submitted, the Department Head will review the request and make an eligibility determination based on the employee's previous work performance, suitability of the position and the needs of the department. If the employee is eligible for telework, then the employee shall draft a *Telework Agreement (Appendix B)* that will be reviewed by the Department Head. If an employee is deemed ineligible, see *Section III.D - Denial of Arrangements*.
3. An employee's collective bargaining agreement should be reviewed for specific provisions regarding work schedules, if applicable, prior to approval.
4. Determination of eligibility shall be made by the Department Head within ten (10) business days of receiving the employee's request.

C. Approval of Arrangements

1. Approval for new employee requests or renewals of existing arrangements must be provided in writing within ten (10) business days of receiving the request. A written notice approving the request must be provided to the requesting employee, which shall include next steps for developing a Telework Agreement.
2. Employees deemed eligible by their Department Head to enter a telework arrangement shall work with the approving Department Head to formulate an agreement and complete the following documents:
3. Telework Agreement shall include:
 - a. Start and end date of agreement (the # of days per week/month an employee may telework are at the discretion of the Department Head);
 - b. The days/hours the employee will be on work status (It is recommended the employee have regularly scheduled days/hours at the designated County worksite to be available for meetings);
 - c. Designated times for break and meal periods;
 - d. Identify the approved telework location;
 - e. Specific job assignments or tasks to be accomplished;
 - f. Job assignments/task deadlines;
 - g. Clearly defined expectations and performance requirements that are measurable and results oriented;
 - h. Work performance evaluation schedule;
 - i. If County equipment is being used at home, a record of such equipment;
 - j. Employee signature; and
 - k. Department Head signature.

D. Denial of Arrangements

1. Denial for new employee requests or renewals of existing arrangements must be provided in writing within ten (10) business days of receiving the request. A written notice denying the request must be provided to the requesting employee, which shall include the reason for the determination.

2. An employee who feels their request was inappropriately denied may submit an appeal to the Commissioner of Human Resources, who will consult with the Department Head and review the decision. After such review, the Department Head will make a final decision whether to approve or deny the request. The final decision may not be contested further with the County.

E. Implementation

1. Once a telework arrangement has been agreed upon, implementation should commence within thirty (30) calendar days of the signed agreement.
2. Department Heads should consult with ITS in advance if an employee requires remote access or technology support in order to work from a designated telework site.
3. If handling confidential information is a requirement of one's job, the employee workspace must safeguard confidential information. Employees must have a locking filing cabinet to store confidential County files.
4. General office supplies (e.g., paper, pens, file folders) and computer equipment (e.g., monitors, mouses, keyboards) will be provided and should be obtained by the employee from their department. Out-of-pocket expenses for supplies available from the department will not be reimbursed. Office furniture or printers will not be provided to employees who telework.
5. Any changes to the written Telework Agreement must be mutually agreed upon, documented in writing, and signed by the employee and applicable Department Head. Periodic adjustments to arrangements may be necessary to achieve an optimal schedule which suits the needs of the employee and the County.
6. Telework performance or work log (*Telework Weekly Log – Appendix C*) reviews will be completed on a schedule at the discretion of the Department Head. Formal written telework evaluations must occur, at minimum, once within the first three (3) months of each telework arrangement. More frequent review and/or evaluation schedules are at the discretion of the Department Head.

F. Termination of Arrangement

1. Telework arrangements may be modified, adjusted, suspended, or terminated by the Department Head or at the request of the employee by providing a written notice a minimum of ten (10) business days prior to the change, where practical.
2. Participation in a telework arrangement may be terminated immediately when the employee no longer meets the eligibility criteria. Reasons for termination may include, but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Completion of a specific project;
 - b. Performance falls below the satisfactory level;
 - c. Service is adversely affected;

- d. Undue burden on co-workers or other County departments;
 - e. Negative impact on the public we serve;
 - f. Conduct or other performance concerns;
 - g. Changes in work duties;
 - h. Other requirements of the telework arrangement are not fulfilled;
or
 - i. Other reasons at the discretion of the Department Head.
3. Thirty (30) calendar days prior to the expiration of an existing telework agreement, the employee has the option to request a renewal of their existing arrangement by filling out a new *Request for Telework Arrangements* form. This process allows the Department Head and employee to evaluate and adjust telework arrangements to meet their workload needs. If terms or details of an arrangement are modified during the renewal process, an updated *Telework Agreement* will be needed.
 4. All supplies and equipment must be returned to the County within five (5) days of termination of telework arrangement or separation of employment.

G. Responsibilities

1. Employees shall:
 - a. Initiate a written request to their Department Head if they are interested in entering into a telework arrangement or renewing their existing telework arrangement.
 - b. Ensure that a high level of public service and work production is maintained, and that abuses of this policy do not occur, including but not limited to maintaining accurate time records to support and substantiate work hours and work products in accordance with normal County and/or department procedures.
 - c. Get advance written authorization for any hours to be worked outside of or beyond their normal work schedule. Failure to comply with this requirement can result in the immediate cessation of the telework arrangement.
 - d. Notify their immediate Supervisor if unable to work on a scheduled telework day, according to normal established departmental procedures. Personal, sick, vacation, holiday, compensatory, or disability leave time scheduled during a scheduled telework day must be arranged following departmental procedure for requesting time off.

For example: If an employee would be too ill to work from the County office, they would also be considered too ill to work from home and must use fringe time to cover time off due to sickness.
 - e. Be available during scheduled work hours by email and phone, with the exceptions of meal and break periods.
 - f. Establish and maintain a confidential, safe, and ergonomic workspace that is free from interruptions (*See Appendix D*).

- g. Maintain appropriate care, use, and security of any County equipment used at the employee's telework site. This includes unauthorized access or use by others including family members, friends, and other visitors of the employee's telework site. All County equipment must be returned in working condition in the event the employee separates from the County. If County equipment is not returned, the separating employee is subject to reduction in their final paycheck from the County or property may be secured through other legal means.
- h. Notify their immediate Supervisor immediately if they are unable to perform their job due to the breakdown or malfunction of equipment, internet, or telephone service. In the event of delay in repair or replacement, or any other circumstance which makes work from the telework location impracticable, the employee understands that their Supervisor may require the employee to report to their designated County worksite.
- i. Abide by all terms of County and departmental policies and procedures while working from a telework site, including maintaining a normal workload and completing all assigned and/or mandatory training.
- j. Participate in work performance reviews and evaluations or work log reviews as necessary.
- k. Recognize that they may be required to work at their designated County worksite at times, attend important meetings, or participate in training sessions which are outside of the telework arrangement per the request of their Department Head. The operational needs of the County take precedence over telework arrangements (i.e., if an employee is approved to work from home on Mondays and Tuesdays and an important meeting is scheduled for in-person attendance on Tuesday, the employee is expected to attend the meeting in-person and will only work one (1) telework day that week.)
- l. Return County provided supplies and/or equipment to the County if the supplies/equipment will no longer be needed by the employee to do their work from a telework site. If the equipment is intended to be shared by others, equipment needs to be returned as per the predetermined schedule.
- m. Be responsible for immediately notifying their immediate Supervisor and the County Risk Manager if they are injured while at their telework site and in conjunction with their regular work duties. Employees must comply with all County reporting requirements established for the purpose of reporting such claims.
- n. Determine what, if any, tax implications there may be in maintaining a home office area. Employees are encouraged to consult with a tax professional prior to requesting a telework arrangement.
- o. Failure to meet employee responsibilities may be cause for termination of the telework arrangement or for disciplinary action

up to and including termination of employment, in accordance with relevant provisions of the NYS Civil Service Law and applicable collective bargaining agreements.

2. Department Heads and/or Supervisors shall:

- a. Ensure that a high level of public service and work production is maintained, and that abuses of this policy do not occur.
- b. Review, approve, and/or deny employee requests or renewals for telework arrangements within ten (10) business days of receiving the request. A written notice granting or denying the request must be provided to the requesting employee and the Department of Human Resources, which shall include the reason for the determination.
- c. Provide written notice for termination of agreements to employees within ten (10) business days, where practical.
- d. Communicate to the employee performance expectations and monitor accomplishment of those expectations through work performance reviews and evaluations as required. Delivery methods (email, phone, in-person) of such reviews and evaluations are at the discretion of the Department Head.
- e. Attempt to give reasonable notice when special meetings, trainings, or a different work schedule are necessary. A minimum of 24-hour notice is recommended.
- f. Ensure that telework arrangements do not burden department staff through inequitable distribution of workloads.
- g. Maintain an official record of all telework arrangements and provide copies of such records to the Department of Human Resources for placement in the employee's personnel file. These records shall include the following:
 - Request for Telework Arrangements;
 - Telework Agreement;
 - Telework Weekly Logs (Optional); and
 - Formal written evaluations (Provide copies to HR).

Appendix A



Tompkins County Department of Human Resources

125 East Court Street, Ithaca, NY 14850 | P: (607) 274-5526 | F: (607) 274-5401 | www.TompkinsCountyNY.gov
Inclusion through Diversity

REQUEST FOR TELEWORK ARRANGEMENTS

(Submit to Department Head or Supervisor)

Employees interested in Telework Arrangements must complete this form and present the document to their Department Head/Supervisor for review. Completion of this form is not a guarantee that telework arrangements will be approved even if an employee is considered "eligible".

Employee Name: _____ Phone (home/work): _____

Department: _____ Position Title: _____

Department Head: _____ Date of Request: _____

1. Please describe how you believe your position and job responsibilities are suited for telecommuting.

2. Telework Location (address): _____

3. Number of days I would like to telecommute (no more than 3 per week): Per week _____ Per month _____

4. Proposed Start Date: _____

5. Proposed Telework Schedule:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Hours							
Meal Period*							
Location**							

* Must include a ½ hour unpaid meal period for any employee who works a shift of more than 6 hours per NYS Department of Labor.

**For location, please use "T" for Telework Location and "D" for Designated County Worksite.

Note: It is recommended the telecommuting employee should have regularly scheduled days/hours at the Designated County Worksite so others will know when they are available for meetings.

6. The following equipment and/or supplies will be my (employee) responsibility to acquire and will be available at the requested telework location prior to the proposed telework start date:

Telephone service Internet service Desk Office Chair

7. Additional equipment and/or supplies I request that the County will provide for Telework location:

PC/Laptop General Office Supplies Other (Please list below)

Employee:

I have discussed teleworking with my supervisor and understand that this request does not constitute a formal agreement or guarantee that I will be approved to telework. I have read the *Tompkins County Administrative Policy: Telework Arrangements (03-21)*, I understand my responsibilities, and further understand that teleworking is not an entitlement and that it may not be appropriate for every employee, department, and/or position to telework.

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Department Head/Supervisor:

I have discussed the option of teleworking with the above-named employee. I have assessed the employee's suitability for telework. Based on my assessment, the position/job responsibilities, and performance in their current position, I have determined that the employee:

is eligible

is not eligible

for telework arrangements and I have informed the employee of the next steps and outcome of this process.

Department Head
Signature: _____ Date: _____

For Human Resources Use Only

Date Received: _____ Received by: _____

Appendix B



Tompkins County Department of Human Resources

125 East Court Street, Ithaca, NY 14850 | P: (607) 274-5526 | F: (607) 274-5401 | www.TompkinsCountyNY.gov
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EMPLOYEE TELEWORK AGREEMENT

(Department Heads: Submit copy to the Department of Human Resources)

Employee Name: _____ Phone (home/work): _____

Department: _____ Position Title: _____

Telework Start Date: _____ Telework End Date: _____

A temporary telework arrangement ("alternative work arrangement") is hereby established between Tompkins County and the above-mentioned employee. The purpose of this agreement is to clarify the terms and conditions under which the employee will be allowed to participate in this work arrangement as described below.

1. Telework Location (address): _____

2. Telework Contact Number(s): _____

3. Telework Schedule:

Number of days (no more than 3 per week): Per week _____ Per month _____

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Hours							
Meal Period*							
Location**							

* Must include a ½ hour unpaid meal period for any employee who works a shift of more than 6 hours per NYS Department of Labor.

**For location, please use "T" for Telework Location and "D" for Designated County Worksite.

4. Assigned tasks/projects (include deadline, if applicable): _____

5. Expectations and Performance Requirements: _____

6. Telework Performance Evaluation Schedule:

7. County Equipment & Serial # Record (if applicable): _____

It is expressly understood and agreed that this work arrangement does not create or define the terms of any contract of employment, whether expressed or implied.

Terms of Arrangement: This telework arrangement shall be in effect for a maximum of six (6) months. Continuation and renewal of said agreement will be evaluated at the end of the stated agreement period. The employee understands that this is a temporary, voluntary arrangement and can be terminated at any time by either party.

This agreement is subject to the employee satisfying the following conditions on a continuing basis:

- Employee obligations, duties, responsibilities, and terms and conditions of employment are unchanged.
- The employee shall perform all job duties at a satisfactory performance level or above.
- The employee must comply with all County and departmental policies and procedures while working a telework schedule.
- The employee will abide by the Telework Arrangements policy and all provisions within that policy.
- The employee will maintain confidentiality as required by the County, Federal, State, and Local laws.
- The employee will maintain the agreed-upon work schedule and be accessible via telephone and email during predetermined telework hours.
- The employee will participate in routine telework performance evaluations/work log reviews as required.
- The employees shall not conduct any unauthorized external (non-County) work during their telework schedule.
- The employee will maintain an ergonomically appropriate home office environment.
- Any non-compliance with these terms by the employee may result in modification or termination of the telework arrangement at any time.

Hours of Work and Compensation: The employee agrees to be responsible for maintaining the agreed upon hours of work and is required to keep a detailed record of hours worked (as well as verification as applicable), and to enter hours worked into the County timekeeping system as instructed. Employee pay rates and accrual of leave time benefits remain unchanged and in accordance with the terms of this agreement the employee will be compensated for all hours during which work is performed. Employees must get advance authorization for any hours worked outside of or beyond their normal work schedule. Employees are required to take rest and meal breaks per NYS

Labor Laws and applicable collective bargaining agreements. The County will not reimburse the employee for the cost of any off-site related expenses and any personal tax implications related to the telework location shall be the employee's responsibility.

Liability: Workers Compensation benefits will apply only to injuries arising out of and in the course of employment as defined by New York State Workers' Compensation Law. The employee must report any such work-related injuries to their supervisor and County Risk Manager immediately. Tompkins County is not responsible for any loss, damage, destruction to property or for any injury or loss to third persons at the approved telework site.

Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure: During the course of their employment with Tompkins County, the aforementioned employee has gained knowledge of and/or access to confidential and proprietary information. By the execution of this agreement, the employee understands that they are expressly prohibited from disclosing to any unauthorized person, company, or other entity any such information, and is prohibited from using any such information for personal gain or profit. The employee understands that confidential information, systems, or data and all items made or compiled by the employee or made available to the employee during any period of employment shall be and remain exclusive property of the County. Upon separation of employment with the County, the employee shall immediately return any such property to the County and no copies thereof may be kept by the employee.

Work Performance Evaluations: Telework performance evaluations will be completed as deemed necessary by the Department Head/designee per departmental policy, but no less frequently than once within the first three (3) months of the telework arrangement. Evaluation schedules are at the discretion of the Department Head or designee.

Agreement Acknowledgment: I have read and understand this agreement and all its provisions. Furthermore, I have read and understand *Tompkins County Administrative Policy 03-21: Telework Arrangements*. By signing below, I agree to be bound by all terms and conditions within this agreement and the County policy. I understand it is my responsibility to make the telework arrangement a success. And that failure to adhere to the provisions set forth may have adverse effects on my employment, and may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to immediate termination of the opportunity to participate in the telework arrangement.

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Department Head
Signature: _____ Date: _____

For Human Resources Use Only	
Date Received: _____	Received by: _____

Ergonomics for the Home Office

Ergonomics is about improving your comfort, health, and productivity with thoughtful workplace design. There are some small changes you can make if you find yourself working from home unexpectedly to transform your space into a temporary office.

The Basics



Monitor

- Set the top of your monitor at, or slightly below, **eye level**
- Keep your **neck straight**, instead of craning or twisting
- Position your monitor about an arm's reach away
- 20-20-20 Rule: Look 20 feet away every 20 minutes for 20 seconds



Keyboard & Mouse

- Make sure your arms are **close to your body**, with elbows near your sides
- Use an external **keyboard and mouse**, and place them close to your body
- Keep your wrists straight by floating your hands above your keyboard when typing



Chair

- Choose a chair with **back support** and sit so your back is fully supported, reclining slightly if possible
- Don't sit on a stool, couch, or exercise ball



Work Surface

- Use a **hard flat surface** such as a table or desk
- Remove clutter and any drawers directly in front of your seat
- If your shoulders aren't relaxed while working, try raising your seat or lowering your workstation
- Keep your knees at 90 degrees, with **feet flat** on the floor

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Quick Fixes

-  Place an additional chair cushion on the seat for extra comfort or height
-  Use a box as a footrest to support your feet and legs
-  Use speakerphone or headphones with a microphone to take calls instead of holding the phone
-  Raise your monitor with an adjustable stand, laptop stand, or stack of books
-  If your monitor is too small, increase the zoom settings
-  If you only have a laptop, tilt the screen backwards to create more distance and use keyboard shortcuts to reduce trackpad use
-  Stand up and move more often if your home setup isn't ideal

More Tips



Movement

- **Sit** for no more than 2 hours at a time
- **Stand** for breaks, phone calls, or other non-computer tasks for up to 30 minutes at a time
- **Move** often by changing positions and walking when possible



Productivity

- **Routine** is still important, including getting dressed for work
- **Breaks** should be taken regularly, including a scheduled lunch
- **Engage** with coworkers through group messaging or video chats periodically



Environment

- **Noise** can be managed with noise-canceling headphones, or by listening to unfamiliar sounds or music in the background
- **Lighting** should be bright overhead, and position your screen away from other light sources to limit glare
- **Air quality** is improved by increasing ventilation with a fan or by keeping doors open

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