

# MONO COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

<b>Subject:</b>  REMOTE WORK	<b>Policy Number:</b> C-2	<b>Page Number:</b> Page 1 of 6
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## PURPOSE

Remote working is an arrangement that allows eligible Mono County employees requesting remote work authorization to work in a designated area outside their regular work location. Where a request is approved, remote working is a cooperative arrangement between employees, supervisors, and employing departments. Administration of the Remote Work Policy and Program within each department is under the authority of the department head or designee, with oversight by the County Administrative Officer.

Remote work can be on a regular and recurring, or an occasional basis. Regular and recurring means an employee works away from the regular worksite on an established day or days, and on a recurring schedule. Occasional remote working means an employee works away from the office on an infrequent, one-time, or irregular basis. This option provides an arrangement for employees who generally need to be in the office, but who sometimes have projects, assignments, or other circumstances that meet the eligibility criteria.

Remote work benefits employees, departments, the County of Mono, and the community. Benefits include:

- Recruitment and retention of highly qualified employees
- Greater flexibility for employees and departments
- Improved employee morale and job satisfaction
- Reduced employee absenteeism
- Reduced employee commute time and costs
- Decreased energy consumption, air pollution, traffic and parking congestion, and transit overcrowding.
- The ability to continue to perform County services during an emergency (such as a wildfire or other natural disaster), severe weather event, power interruption, pandemic, or other unexpected events which would render the principal work location inaccessible or unsuitable.

## POLICY

Remote work is a privilege, not a right. All County employees who work remotely must have an approved remote work agreement under this policy. A County department may have additional remote work requirements, guidelines, or procedures, provided they are consistent with the intent of this program. Subject to the oversight of the County Administrative Officer, a department head may determine to not allow remote work based upon department performance objectives, customer service objectives, staffing shortages, supervisory needs, training objectives, or for any reason that is not arbitrary or capricious.

1. Remote work does not change the duties, obligations, responsibilities, or terms and conditions of County employment. Remote work must not reduce employee, department,

or County productivity or performance. Employees who are working remotely must comply with all County rules, policies, practices, and instructions.

2. In addition to allowing employees to work from an alternate location for all, or a portion of the normal work week, a remote work arrangement may also include flexibility in the hours worked, as long as those hours do not violate any laws, regulations, policies, or contractual obligations and are approved by the department. However, an employee who is working remotely must perform work during scheduled working hours, unless otherwise approved by their supervisor. Employees may not engage in activities that are inconsistent, incompatible, and in conflict with County business while working remotely and any perform any activity that would otherwise not be permitted at the regular worksite such as personal business or dependent care. Employees should check with their supervisor regarding the possibility of implementing a flexible work arrangement for such circumstances. Employees who are working remotely may take care of personal business during unpaid lunch periods or using paid leave, as they would at the regular worksite.
3. Employees must read this Remote Work Program Policy, review the [IT Policies](#), be familiar with [Home/Remote Work Resources](#) on SharePoint, work with their supervisor on a remote work agreement through the departmental approval process, and receive permission from their department before they are allowed to work remotely.
4. A supervisor or a department may deny, end, or modify a Remote Work Agreement for any business reason that is not arbitrary or capricious. Similarly, an employee may end or request to change a remote agreement. Employees may be removed from the Remote Work Program if they do not comply with the terms of their remote work agreements or for any business reason including but not limited to unsatisfactory work performance or misuse and/or abuse of this policy. Finally, the County Administrative Officer may approve, modify or deny a Remote Work Agreement if he or she determines that it is the best interests of the County to do so.
5. **The Mono County Remote Work Policy and Program is voluntary on the part of the employee and is intended to be cost neutral. The County is not required to provide employees electing to work remotely with materials or supplies, or cover additional expenses needed to establish an alternate worksite (desk, chair, computer, software, cell phone, fax, copier, etc.), and assumes no responsibility for set-up or operating costs at an alternate worksite (telephone or internet services, etc.).**
6. In some cases, as approved by the department, employees may work on a personal computer. However, the IT Department will only provide support for County computers. Remote employees may be contacted by the County via their cell phone (as a secondary measure of communication), but remote employees are not entitled to cell phone reimbursement from the County. Determination for cell phone reimbursement falls within the Mono County Cell Phone Policy.

Departments have the sole discretion to provide equipment, software, or supplies, or allow employees to use their personal equipment while working remotely, unless the County Administrative Officer directs otherwise. Departments providing equipment, software, or other supplies to remote employees must reasonably allocate those resources based on operational and workload needs and coordinate any request for equipment with IT before committing to the allocation.

7. Employees shall adhere to all laws, regulations, County policies and rules while working remotely.

## ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility for remote work is based on both the position and the employee. Not every job, or every employee, is well-suited for remote work.

### 1. Position Eligibility

An employee's position may be suitable for remote work when the job duties:

- Are independent in nature
- Are primarily knowledge-based
- Lend themselves to measurable deliverables
- Do not require the employee's immediate presence at the regular worksite to address unscheduled events, unless alternative arrangements for coverage are possible
- Are not essential to the management of on-site workflow
- Not required to engage in daily or regular face-to-face interaction with the public
- Can be performed at a remote location during a regularly scheduled workday or portion thereof

### 2. Employee Eligibility

When considering an employee request to work remotely, the Supervisor shall consider whether the employee has:

- Demonstrated dependability, responsibility, and integrity
- Effective communication with supervisors, coworkers, and clients
- Demonstrated motivation and good judgment
- The ability to work independently
- A consistently high rate of productivity
- A high level of skill and knowledge of the job
- The ability to prioritize work effectively
- Good organizational and time management skills.
- Passed probation (unless this requirement is specifically waived by the department head or designee).

3. Meeting Standards. Employees who fail to uphold County obligations, such as meeting performance standards or workplace conduct expectations, are not eligible to work remotely.

4. Alterations to Remote Schedule. Employees who work remotely must be available to work at the regular worksite on remote days as needed, as determined by their supervisor. Conversely, occasional requests by employees to change their regularly scheduled remote days should be accommodated by the supervisor, whenever possible. Employees must obtain prior authorization to change a regularly scheduled remote day. The remote worker and their department head or designee must review and sign the Remote Work Agreement at least every six months.

## WORK HOURS

All the rules applicable at the regular worksite are applicable while working remotely. These include, but are not limited to:

- Remote employees must perform their designated work during scheduled work hours, unless otherwise approved by their supervisor.

- Employees must account for and report time spent working remotely the same way they would at the regular worksite, or according to the terms of the remote work agreement
  - Time accounting should be included in the remote work agreement
- Employees may work overtime only when directed to do so and approved in advance by the supervisor
- Employees must obtain approval to use vacation, sick, or other leave in the same manner as departmental employees who do not work remotely.
- Remote employees who become ill must report the hours actually worked and use sick leave for hours not worked.
- Remote employees must come into the office on a regularly scheduled remote day when the department requires it.
- Remote employees are expected to respond in a timely manner and be available and accessible by phone, email, video calls during work hours.

## WORKSITE

1. A remote employee must have a work area suitable for performing official business. Requirements for the designated work area will vary depending on the nature of the work and the equipment needed and may be determined by the department. An example of a work area that meets the ergonomic and efficiency standards can be viewed [here](#), and remote employees shall familiarize themselves with how to have an appropriate desk setup at the previous link and also watch the video [here](#).
2. Because remote employees must work in an environment that allows them to perform their duties professionally, safely, and efficiently, the County and/or department may request photographs of the employee's designated work area to determine compliance with department and County expectations.
3. The County is not liable for damages to an employee's personal or real property while the employee is working at an alternate worksite.

## EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

A remote employee must identify the equipment, software, supplies, and support required to successfully work at an alternate location, which shall be listed in the remote work agreement. If the department does not provide the needed equipment, software, supplies, or support, and the employee does not have them, the employee will not be eligible to work remotely.

1. County Equipment
  - a. Equipment, software, or supplies provided by the County are for County business only.
  - b. A remote employee does not obtain any rights to County equipment, software, or supplies provided in connection with remote work. The employee must immediately return all County equipment, software, and supplies at the conclusion of the remote work arrangement or at the department's request.
  - c. A remote employee must protect County equipment, software, and supplies from possible theft, loss, and damage. The remote employee may be liable for replacement or repair of the equipment, software, or supplies in compliance with applicable laws on negligence or intentional conduct in the event of theft, loss, or damage.
  - d. Any equipment, software, files, and databases provided by the County shall remain the property of the County. A remote employee must adhere to all software copyright laws and may not make unauthorized copies of any County-owned software or data. Employees may not add hardware or software to County equipment without prior written approval.

## 2. Personal Equipment

- a. Employees who use their personal equipment for working remotely are responsible for the installation, repair, and maintenance of the equipment. The IT Department will not provide support for personal devices.
- b. Remote employees must understand and agree that, to the extent allowed by law, the County is entitled to, and may access, any personal equipment used while working remotely, such as a personal computer, telephone, fax machine, monthly bills, and internet records.
- c. Employees must contact their supervisors if equipment, connectivity, or other supply problems prevent them from working while working remotely. Additionally, supervisors must address employee performance issues related to remote employee internet connectivity, cell phone connectivity, and equipment problems. If equipment, connectivity, or other supply problems prevent an employee from effectively working remotely, then the department may determine that remote work is not allowed under these circumstances.
- d. If the remote worker encounters constraints that prohibit them from continuing the remote engagement (e.g., required equipment fails), the remote worker must either report to their primary work location to continue working, or notify their department head or designee to determine if alternate work location and/or assignments can be arranged to continue the remote engagement. Alternatively, with department head or designee approval, the employee may take remaining time off via vacation or personal leave time banks (excluding sick leave).

## 3. Security of Confidential Information

- a. All files, records, papers, or other materials created while working remotely are County property. Remote employees and their supervisors shall identify any confidential, private, or personal information and records to be accessed and ensure appropriate safeguards are used to protect them. **A department may require employees to work in private locations when handling confidential or sensitive material.** Departments may prohibit employees from printing confidential information in remote locations to avoid breaches of confidentiality or disclosure of any sensitive information.
- b. Employees may not disclose confidential or private files, records, materials, or information, and may not allow access to County networks or databases to anyone who is not authorized to have access.

## 4. California Public Records Act

The California Public Records Act applies to county records regardless of location or the device upon which they are stored or maintained. Public records include any writing or recording containing information relating to the conduct of the public's business that is prepared, owned, used, or retained by the County regardless of physical form or characteristic. Public information means the contents of a public record. Upon receipt of an appropriate request, and subject to authorized exemptions, a remote employee must permit inspection and examination of any public record or public information in the employee's custody, or any segregable portion of a public record, within required time limits.

## 5. Procedures

Employees must complete the following steps before working remotely:

- a. Talk with the supervisor to determine eligibility

- b. Read and agree to the Remote Work Program Policy
- c. Complete the remote work agreement with their supervisor
- d. Receive approval of the remote work agreement in accordance with the department's approval process

6. Denial of Application

- a. The County's Remote Work Policy and Program is not subject to the grievance procedures in any Memorandum of Understanding, or to any other review or appeal procedures, except as noted in this policy.
- b. An employee may appeal a denial of their application to the department head or designee. If the supervisor who issued the denial is the department head, then the denial may be appealed to the Chief People Officer or designee.
- c. The decision of the department head or designee is final, unless the County Administrative Officer determines that the best interests of the County require a different outcome and exercises his or her oversight authority to direct otherwise.