



## MUNICIPALITY OF ROBLIN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

<b>Section:</b> Employees	<b>Policy No.:</b> EMP-005
<b>Subject:</b> Working from Home Policy	<b>Date Issued:</b> January 25, 2022
<b>Resolution No.:</b> 2022-030	<b>Revision Date:</b>

### **Purpose:**

Our Working from Home Policy outlines guidelines for employees who perform work either on an on-going basis or when required, from time to time, for either all or part of a work week. The Municipality of Roblin (hereafter the "Municipality" or "Employer") wants to ensure that both employees and the business will benefit from these arrangements. We have found ourselves in the present COVID-19 pandemic, where our workplace is deemed a non-essential service, and some of our employees may need to work remotely, if possible.

Not all jobs within the Municipality are suitable for a working at home arrangement where it may be appropriate for some employees and their jobs, but not for others. Therefore, only employees whose duties are administrative/clerical are allowed to work from home and only with the approval of the Chief Administrative Officer (hereafter the "CAO").

Working from home is not an entitlement or a benefit and it does not change the terms and conditions of employment or job offer with the Municipality.

Working from home arrangements can be changed at any time. Every effort will be made to provide sufficient notice of such changes especially when considering childcare and other concerns that may arise from the change. Please contact the CAO to ensure that we are aware of an additional needs or accommodations required as your home workspace may be impacted because young children are out of school and/or unable to be sent to childcare facilities.

### **Reasons for Working from Home:**

Reasons why employees and immediate supervisors may consider working from home options include, but are not limited to:

- Special Projects
- Parenting Considerations/Accommodations
- Unsafe Weather Conditions

- Home/personal Emergencies
- Medical Reasons
- Work-Life Balance
- Long Commutes to and from Work
- Business Travel
- The workplace is closed because provincial health and safety standards require it.

Other reasons for working from home will depend on employee and their immediate supervisor/manager judgement.

There may also be situations where employees may be asked to work from home due to unforeseen business closures such as in the event of a fire, power outage, flood, local disasters, pandemic, etc. These arrangements are approved on an as-needed basis only, with no expectation of ongoing continuance.

Other informal, short-term arrangements may be made for employees on family or medical leave to the extent practical for the employee and the business and with the consent of the employee's health care provider, if appropriate.

All informal work from home arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the needs of the business.

### **Eligibility:**

Employees who request to work from home must have successfully completed their probationary period and must have at least a satisfactory performance record. The Municipality will work hard in the case of a workplace shutdown to accommodate remote work for as many employees as possible, and great care will be taken to ensure that employees who must attend the office, do so in the most safe and controlled manner.

### **Approval:**

All Working from Home Arrangements must be approved in advance by the CAO. Before approving a work from home arrangement, the CAO will need to consider the following (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Are the employee's work habits suitable for a working from home arrangement?
- Are the job responsibilities appropriate and do they permit a working from home arrangement?
- Does the employee need to interact with sponsors/clients in order to complete their jobs?

- Will collaboration and communication with their team or with other departments become difficult?
- Will there be any privacy concerns and/or any concerns related to security of business information and data?
- Can and will employees have the necessary equipment and/or software installed at home?
- Are the conditions at an employee's home or alternative place of work conducive to work (noise, internet connection, etc.)?
- Are there certain days of the year where working from home may not be possible (example: during vacation periods for appropriate office coverage, etc.)?

The CAO will work with the Department Head or the HR/Policy Committee and will also ensure that work expectations are set out clearly and will advise employees as to the type of work that should be done as well as the quality and standard of work, along with short term and long-term goals. Deadlines and timelines may also be set depending on the nature of the work.

The lines of communication will be kept open and communication expectations will be discussed in advance to working from home. Frequent meetings and touchpoints (either online, in-person, conference call, etc.) will be determined, in advance, by the CAO.

### **Employee Obligations:**

In order to ensure that an employee's performance will not suffer in a working from home arrangement, employees will be required to:

- Ensure an enhanced security program is in place to avoid being hacked. The antivirus is the first barrier of protection against malware when they have reached your computer, so it is important to install an effective one.
- Using only maintained software where vulnerabilities are fixed is recommended against infection and ensuring regular operating system and software is up to date.
- Choose a quiet and distraction-free working space (e.g. noise, dog barking, music playing in background, child practicing an instrument, etc.).
- Have an internet connection that is adequate for the work that is required to be completed.
- Dedicate their full attention to the job duties during working hours.
- Adhere to break and attendance schedules agreed upon with their immediate supervisor/manager.
- Ensure schedules overlap with all team members for as long as is necessary to complete job duties effectively.

- Ensure schedules align with service requirements for sponsor/client-based support services and ensure the level of service delivery is not disrupted.
- Ensure the lines of communication (email, phone, conference calls, etc.) are always left open during working hours with their immediate supervisor/manager. This practice would mirror the manner and frequency as to what would be expected in an office environment.
- Ensure they are available during assigned regular working hours.
- Refrain from posting on social media during working hours.
- And, if technology allows, work office phones will be forwarded to cell/home phone numbers.

**Equipment:**

The immediate supervisor/manager will determine, on a case-by-case basis, with information supplied by the employee, the appropriate equipment requirements needed that are essential to their job (including hardware, software, modems, phone and data lines, laptops, headsets, cell phones, and other office equipment).

The following guidelines shall apply:

- Any equipment supplied by Municipality will be maintained by Computer Solutions including replacements and repairs. In the event of equipment malfunction, please notify CAO or Assistant CAO immediately.
- The Municipality accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment.
- You are responsible for all remote work equipment belonging to the employer and will be responsible for the replacement value of that equipment that cannot be accounted for.
- The Municipality reserves the right to make determinations as to appropriate equipment, which is subject to change at any time.
- Any equipment supplied by the Municipality is to be used for business purposes only.
- Employees must sign an inventory of all business provided equipment received and agree to take appropriate action to protect the items from damage or theft.
- The Municipality will supply the employee with appropriate office supplies (pens, paper, computer paper, etc.) as deemed necessary.
- In the event where an employee incurs business related expenses, the Municipality will reimburse the employee by direct deposit or cheque, such as phone calls, shipping costs, etc. that are reasonably incurred in carrying out the employee's job. In these situations, employees will be required to submit an expense claim form, accompanied by receipts. Approval from the employee's

- immediate supervisor/manager must be obtained prior to costs being incurred.
- All equipment provided is considered company property, therefore, employees are required to keep it safe and secured and avoid any misuse. Specifically, employees must:
    - Keep all company equipment password protected and not share passwords with anyone.
    - Store company equipment in a safe and clean area, when not in use.
    - Refrain from downloading suspicious, unauthorized and/or illegal software or information.

### **Employees Home-Work Environment:**

The following guidelines shall apply:

- Employees will be required to establish an appropriate work environment within their home for work purposes.
- The Municipality will not be responsible for any costs associated with the setup of an employee's home office, such as remodeling, furniture or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to the home office space.
- Working from home is not designed to be a replacement for appropriate childcare. Even though an employee's schedule may be able to be modified to accommodate childcare needs, the focus of the arrangement must remain on job performance and meeting business demands. Employees must speak with their immediate supervisor to discuss expectations of working from home with family members.

### **Compliance with the Municipality of Roblin's Policies and Procedures:**

All home-based employees will be required to follow all company policy, procedures, and guidelines. This expectation does not change while working from home. Examples of some of these policies are:

- Attendance
- Social Media
- Respectful Workplace
- Confidentiality
- Health and Safety
- Data Protection
- Code of Conduct
- Dress Code (when meeting with customers/clients and other business partners)

**Security:**

Consistent with the Municipality expectations of information security for employees working at the office, employees working from home will be expected to ensure the protection of proprietary company and sponsor/client information accessible from their home office. Considerations include the use of locked file cabinets and desks, regular password maintenance, and any other measures appropriate for the job and the environment.

**Health and Safety:**

Even though employees who are working from home, employees are removed from the immediate office environment, and the business has less control over the work environment, all parties should be aware of and manage potential risks to health and safety. Employees working from home are still expected to abide by the businesses same Health and Safety policies, procedures, and guideline procedures that apply to office employees.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of guidelines should be followed when working from home.

Employees are expected to:

- Maintain their home workspace in a safe manner, free from safety hazards.
- Have a specific location where they work.
- Ensure proper lighting, ventilation, heating / air-conditioning are in place.
- Have first aid supplies in place.
- Take a reasonable number of breaks to recharge and to avoid work injuries such as eye strain / headaches, musculoskeletal disorders, or fatigue.
- Ensure that workstation design is adequate.
- Ensure that filing cabinets, shelving, bookcases and desks do not become sources of injuries.
- Clean all spills immediately.
- Meet sponsors/clients away from your home, in a public location and inform your immediate supervisor of meeting. Ensure that you always take your cell phone with you and keep it in a place you can access quickly. In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, ensure that social distance measures are followed, and that any face-to-face meetings are pre-approved by the CAO.
- Whenever you are driving to attend either a customer/client meeting, having a meeting at the office, or at a business meeting, safe driving is essential.

In an event of a work-based injury, employees working from home are required to notify the CAO immediately of such injuries as soon as possible. The employee is liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to their home worksite.

**Hours of Work:**

Guidelines are as follows:

- Employees will work their regular hours of work unless otherwise directly advised by their immediate supervisor/manager.
- Employees will be paid for their standard hours of work as agreed upon in their employment agreements. The working from home agreement does not alter, modify, or waive your terms of employment set out in an employee's employment agreement or offer of employment other than as specified in this policy.
- Employees who work in excess of hours worked of those scheduled per day and per work week will require the advanced approval of their immediate supervisor/manager. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in formal disciplinary action. The Municipality will comply with all legislation applicable to hours of work.
- Any schedule changes must be discussed with and approved in advance by your immediate supervisor.

**Time Tracker:**

All employees will be required to track their time. The CAO in consultation with Department Head, HR/Policy Committee, and/or the Accounting/Finance Department will provide instructions as to how to do this prior to beginning working from home. Any further questions in relation to this policy can be directed to the CAO.