

# Telecommuting guidance

---

*Office of Human Resources*

## Purpose

At the conclusion of this training, you will be able to:

- Fairly and consistently implement telecommuting (remote work) while maintaining standards of work and ensuring expectations are met
- Navigate requests from employees to telecommute or establish telecommuting practices for employees to increase social distancing

## What is social distancing?

- Social distancing is a way of preventing the spread of contagious illnesses, as suggested by the World Health Organization
- Social distancing doesn't mean staying inside
- It means keeping a generous amount of space, six to ten feet or more, between you and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.

## How does social distancing work?

- It reduces population density in confined spaces
- It ensures there is a safe distance of six feet between people, especially those who are coughing or sneezing

## What is telecommuting?

A work arrangement in which supervisors direct or permit employees to perform their usual job duties away from their central workplace

## Greenville Technical College's Social Distancing Position

- As of March 16, GTC implemented social distancing in an effort to decrease the spread of COVID-19
- College employees should not physically report to work unless their presence on campus is deemed essential by supervisor
- For positions where telecommuting can be deployed to sustain business activities or to accommodate employees with special circumstances, follow the guidance in this training

## Telecommuting

Establish telecommuting:

- To reduce the number of individuals working in a confined space

Or for those employees who

- Fall into a high-risk or special population category
- Need to modify their work to care for children
- Need to modify their work to care for quarantined or sick family members

## Special Consideration

Employees may need special considerations beyond telecommuting due to:

- Individuals who fall in the CDC and DHEC high risk or special population categories: older adults; people who have serious chronic medical conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease; people with compromised immune systems; and pregnant women.
- Individuals caring for children remaining at home during school closures.
- Individuals caring for quarantined or sick family members.

## Planning for Telecommuting

Supervisors should ensure

- Goals and roles are clear for employees
- Employees are informed when circumstances require change
- Extra effort is made to stay personally connected with employees
- Time records are kept for non-exempt employees

### **If telecommuting is an option for the employee:**

- Document the work required to be completed remotely
- Explain your expectations for completion of the work

Based on the employee's situation, the supervisor may need to complete telecommuting planning through a WebEx, Zoom, or phone conversation. Follow up any verbal agreement with an email to the employee

### **If telecommuting is not an option for the employee based on the type of work performed:**

- The supervisor can develop other meaningful, related activities for the employee to complete in order to facilitate telecommuting
- The supervisor should discuss the option of using sick and/or annual leave (and/or accrued but unused compensatory time for non-exempt employees) if no other options are available

Due to the employee's unique situation, telecommuting may not be possible (examples):

- Caring for young children
- Caring for a sick family member

In these cases, the supervisor should discuss the option of using sick and/or annual (accrued but unused compensatory time for non-exempt employees) leave during the absence. Leave eligible employees may request an advance of up to 15 days of sick leave if needed.

## Work Expectations

Establish clear expectations regarding the desired completion of work

Define for each employee:

- What activities should be worked on
- How much time it should take per activity
- What resources will be required to complete the activities
- Ensure the employee has access to the required resources
- Check in daily with your employee using the college's remote connections (phone call, WebEx or Zoom)
- Be open to questions, address roadblocks, and keep the employee motivated and on track for deliverables
- Discuss with your employee the length of time that the telecommuting agreement will be in effect. Be open to changes based on state guidance (governor's office), college decisions, and the employee's unique situation
- The telecommuting agreement is not intended to be a permanent change in the employee's work environment
- Establish expectations for returning to normal business operations

## Recommendations

- It is recommended that supervisors review the Telecommuting Policy. The need for a telecommuting agreement has been waived for the COVID 19 event
- At a minimum, the supervisor should follow the planning guidance in this training to ensure required college operations and business continue
- If an accommodation is needed due to COVID-19, please keep good documentation that includes the employee's name, telecommuting work schedule, and work assignments/expectations

## Helpful Sites

- Every day, we receive more information and guidance from the state of South Carolina. Please remain flexible and attentive to both your work and the employee's needs
- We will post any updates on the GTC COVID-19 web page. Be sure to review the page and direct your employees to the page as well

## Unsure of Your Options?

- Submit your questions to HR via phone call or email to Susan Jones at (864) 250-8191 or [susan.m.jones@gvltec.edu](mailto:susan.m.jones@gvltec.edu)