

## **Emergency Telecommuting Arrangement**

### **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

With appropriate use of technology and managerial oversight during an emergency situation, staff whose roles do not require all work hours to be performed at their Southern Methodist University Dallas campus work location may be eligible for telecommuting as a flexible work arrangement. All telecommuting and remote work arrangements are at the discretion of the employee's department.

#### **What is an Emergency Telecommuting Arrangement?**

Emergency telecommuting is a temporary arrangement during an emergency situation such as a natural disaster, pandemic, etc. where an employee must still fulfill his/her job responsibilities to ensure business continuity. Telecommuting allows employees to perform their normal job responsibilities in a non-traditional work space. The Emergency Telecommuting Arrangement should be completed whenever possible to document employee location and performance expectations.

#### **Who should have an Emergency Telecommuting Arrangement?**

Anyone who will be working away from the traditional office space during emergency situations. Departments that can determine in advance of an emergency situation the employees required to telecommute should complete the Emergency Telecommuting Arrangement in advance. Employees who become aware of the need to emergency telecommute must fill out an Emergency Telecommuting Arrangement document located at [www.\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](http://www.smu.edu/telecommuting). The reason the employee is requesting permission to emergency telecommute

- Definition of the time period needed to telecommute
- The location of the alternate work site, e.g. "I will be working from my home"
- Any arrangements that need to be made to transfer any of the employee's work to others who will be in the work environment
- Contact information for the employee including backup and emergency contacts

The manager will approve/deny the employee's request via email. The employee should not assume that their request has been approved until the manager responds to the request.

If the request is not approved, the employee will need to take sick/vacation days as appropriate.

If the request is approved, the manager will inform others in the work unit that the employee will be telecommuting and will share their contact information.

#### **Can contingent (temporary/casual) staff work from home?**

Normally, it is by exception that a temporary/casual employee can telecommute. However, under emergency circumstances, temporary/casual employees can be approved to

telecommute if telecommuting is compatible with the employee's job responsibilities. Managers must ensure that hourly (overtime-eligible) employees adhere to laws related to breaks, meal periods, and overtime.

### **What are the employee responsibilities during any Emergency Telecommuting Arrangement?**

- Maintain or exceed productivity, work standards, and customer service requirements regardless of work location
- Maintain the schedule approved by the manager
- Maintain availability including the use of chat, email, text, teleconferencing tools, and telephone
- Respond to all work related communications in a timely manner
- Provide his/her contact information while telecommuting to other employees within the unit

### **What are the manager responsibilities during any Emergency Telecommuting Arrangement?**

- Approve of all necessary Emergency Telecommuting Arrangements
- Keep records of all Emergency Telecommuting Arrangements
- Ensure that a sufficient number of employees within each unit are available within the physical office environment to meet business continuity needs
- Monitor and assess ongoing telecommuting impact on workload, productivity, team morale, and customer service
- Notify employees of any critical information
- Continue necessary communications to all employees
- Set specific, measureable, and attainable goals with deadlines for all employees and provide feedback as necessary
- All other managerial responsibilities and obligations remain intact

### **How should managers assess the performance of employees who are telecommuting?**

Because telecommuting does not allow in-person observation, managers should focus on results based assessments. Set up regular discussions where the manager and employees can review goals, deadlines, and status of items in progress as well as review work quality.

### **How will the Emergency Telecommuting Arrangement be discontinued?**

If the Emergency Telecommuting Arrangement becomes unfeasible at any time or is no longer necessary for emergency purposes, it may be discontinued at the discretion of management with reasonable notice to the employee.