

Policy Title: COVID-19 Ad Hoc Telecommuting Policy

Department: County Manager's Office

Chapter: 1

Section: 5

Policy: 2

Effective Date: March 16, 2020

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

As a result of the national emergency arising from the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States, Ramsey County hereby authorizes temporary telecommuting arrangements for eligible employees to help balance the health and safety of Ramsey County employees with the commitment to services for Ramsey County residents.

This policy includes guidance for supervisors, employees, and departments to help setup temporary telecommuting arrangements quickly and successfully.

This policy became effective March 16, 2020 and was revised in August 2020, November 2020, and March 2021. Ramsey County may extend or terminate this policy at any time.

### Ad Hoc Telecommuting

For the purposes of this policy, "Ad Hoc Telecommuting" is a temporary, needs-based work arrangement where some or all work is performed from home or another off-site location.

### Eligible Roles

Telecommuting is best suited for roles or tasks that require reading, writing, research, working with data, and talking on the phone. In general, and at management's discretion, a role is suited to telecommuting if the role or some components of it can be done off-site without disruption of services to residents, workflow, and communications to the team and management.

The department will consider the criteria below when determining whether a position is eligible for ad hoc telecommuting:

- Can the job be performed with equal or greater effectiveness by telecommuting?

- Can productivity be monitored and measured?
- Does the position require daily face to face contact with colleagues or the public?
- Is off-site work consistent with state and federal data privacy requirements?
- Is presence in the office essential to the position?
- Can the employee reasonably be provided with the technology, information, or other tools they need to succeed?

### Conditions and Expectations

Unless indicated otherwise in writing, all terms and conditions of employment with Ramsey County remain unchanged by an employee's status as an ad hoc telecommuter. Telecommuters must adhere to all Ramsey County policies, including, but not limited to, the Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources Policy, HIPPA Policies and Procedures and the General Data Privacy Policies. Telecommuters must adhere to all state and federal data practices requirements and guidelines that apply.

Telecommuters are expected to perform their modified roles at the same or higher proficiency as when working from within a county facility or office. Telecommuters should notify their supervisor immediately if there are issues in reaching and maintaining the modified performance goals. If a telecommuter experiences a work disruption, they must inform the supervisor and discuss options.

Telecommuters must be available by phone, video-conferencing, or other method established by their supervisor.

Telecommuters must maintain a set work schedule that is agreed to by their supervisor to ensure an accurate understanding of time worked. Telecommuters must share their calendars or otherwise check-in with their supervisor to ensure safety of the employee and accurate time reporting. Any deviation from regular office hours must be approved by their supervisors.

Supervisors are expected to establish individual expectations and monitor performance to ensure that the departmental standards are being met.

### Document Handling and Data Privacy

Telecommuters must comply with all county, state, and federal laws and rules for handling files and computer data. Telecommuters must ensure the following:

- All files must be transferred to and from the office in a secure manner, and not left unattended at any time.
- All files containing Ramsey County employee or client sensitive data must be stored in a locked drawer, file cabinet, case, or other secured location that is inaccessible to other household members.
- The appropriate county-mandated secure log-on procedures must be used when accessing county systems (e.g., SSIS, MAXIS, MMIS) and any other private information databases, and logging off systems when not working at the computer.
- Other household occupants must be prevented from looking at computer data and files.
- All paper copies of private data or private health information printed at home, or brought home from the office, must be kept in a secure location until they can be shredded sufficiently to make the text unreadable.

If more than one requirement applies in any situation, the telecommuter must comply with the most stringent requirement.

Telecommuters must take all reasonable precautions to protect Ramsey County documents from theft, damage, or misuse. If county data is compromised, the employee must immediately notify their supervisor.

### No In-Person Meetings in Homes

Telecommuters are prohibited from conducting in-person client meetings in their homes. Telecommuters may be required to return to the office with reasonable notice to attend onsite meetings or to cover for other employees. Telecommuters may need to adjust their schedules to ensure appropriate staffing for client facing roles and other roles that require on-site staff.

### Work Equipment

Telecommuters have the option to take home certain kinds of work equipment for work-related purposes, as follows:

- Desk chairs.

- Portable, rolling file cabinets with locks, for those telecommuters who need to store client and confidential information at home and who have no means to access and store such information electronically.
- Necessary technology equipment, such as computer monitors and keyboards.

The transfer of work equipment to a home worksite is subject to the following conditions:

- Telecommuters must obtain their manager or supervisor's approval for the work equipment to be taken home.
- The manager or supervisor must maintain a log of what items telecommuters have taken home.
- Telecommuters are responsible for the transport of work equipment to their homes and for the set-up of work equipment in their homes. They should exercise caution and good judgment in lifting and transporting these items.

Ramsey County-provided equipment and office supplies remain the property of the county and are to be used only for work-related purposes. File cabinets must be locked when not in use. Telecommuters who are issued equipment by Ramsey County must comply with the Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources Policy. If any worker compensation claim is filed due to injury that occurs during the transport or delivery of work equipment, the county will record and track such claims.

The county is not responsible for hardware or network difficulties due to a telecommuter using incompatible equipment or where service providers block access to county services. In such case the telecommuting will be reviewed to determine whether the arrangement will continue.

Ramsey County will make workplace accommodations for those with conditions that existed pre-pandemic in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Employees who are requesting an accommodation while ad hoc telecommuting should contact Occupational Health and Safety in Human Resources for information, support and resources (contact information below).

#### Home Inspections for Employees Handling Federal Tax Information

Employees handling Federal Tax Information are subject to the same safeguard requirements and the highest level of attainable security as applicable to in-office employees.

The IRS may visit telecommuting worksites to conduct safeguard reviews for all employees that handle Federal Tax Information. In addition, Ramsey County is also required to perform home visits to ensure data is safeguarded.

Ramsey County will work with the affected teams to meet the requirements during this ad hoc telecommuting period.

## DEFINITIONS

Ad Hoc Telecommuting: A temporary, needs-based work arrangement where some or all work is performed from home or another off-site location.

## CONTACTS / SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

### Compliance and Ethics Office

Data Compliance Manager: [651-266-8000](tel:651-266-8000)

Health Care Compliance Manager: [651-266-8000](tel:651-266-8000)

### Property Management

Property Management Manager: [651-266-2262](tel:651-266-2262)

### Human Resources

Occupational Health and Safety: [651-266-2929](tel:651-266-2929)

Disability and Leave of Absence Administration: 651-266-2729

HR Generalists: 651-266-2700 or RamseyNet page, [Human Resources Generalists](#)

### Labor Relations

Labor Relations Manager: [651-266-2728](tel:651-266-2728)

## REVISION HISTORY

<b>Date</b>	<b>Brief description of change</b>	<b>Approval</b>
March 2020	This Ad Hoc Telecommuting Policy applies to Ramsey County	Name: Ryan O'Connor Title: Ramsey County Manager Date: March 16, 2020
August 2020	This Ad Hoc Telecommuting Policy applies to Ramsey County  Page 3: Destruction of paper copies of private data and private health information	Name: Deanna Pesik Title: Chief Compliance & Ethics Officer Date: August 14, 2020
November 2020	Page 2-3: Work Equipment  Page 2-4: Document Handling and Data Privacy  Page 1-2: Eligible Roles	Name: Deanna Pesik Title: Chief Compliance & Ethics Officer Date: November 20, 2020
March 2021	Page 4: ADA compliance	Name: Elizabeth Tolzmann Title: Director, Policy and Planning Division Date: March 15, 2021

## APPROVAL

Name: Ryan O'Connor

Title: Ramsey County Manager

Date: March 16, 2020