



Report to Personnel Committee

Department: Human Resources
Date: November 26, 2021
Prepared by: Brandi Sieben
Submitted by: Brandi Sieben
Report Number: Human Resources 2021-03
Subject: HR Policy 03-21- Hybrid Work Model Policy (1 Year Trial)
Number of Pages: 10

Recommendation(s)/Conclusion(s)

It is recommended that:

- i) Human Resources Report 2021-03 be received; and
- ii) That Personnel Committee provide a recommendation for Council approval and adoption of HR Policy 03-21 Hybrid Work Model Policy (1 Year trial).

Reason for the Report

Personnel Committee review is needed to adopt new Corporate HR policies for the Town.

Background

Currently, the Town only has a work from home policy that could be enacted during a declared emergency. As COVID restrictions continue to lift, a wide range of hybrid arrangements have emerged, granting employees flexibility that was seldom offered before. In addition, Windsor and Essex County are currently experiencing a shortage of qualified candidates in the municipal sector, making it a competitive labour market. Providing flexibility like a hybrid work model may assist in retention and recruitment efforts.

The Hybrid Work Model Policy provides the provisions for work from home arrangements, on a one-year basis, at which time the policy will be reviewed by the Senior Management Team.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact to the implementation of this policy.

Consultations

Lori Chadwick, Director, Development Services

Kevin Girard, Director, Infrastructure Services

Kate Giurissevich, Director, Corporate Services

Doug Sweet, CAO

Link to Strategic Priorities

- ☐ Manage, invest and plan for sustainable municipal infrastructure which meets current and future needs of the municipality and its citizens.
- ☐ Create a safe, friendly and inclusive community which encourages healthy, active living for people of all ages and abilities.
- ☐ Provide a fiscal stewardship and value for tax dollars to ensure long-term financial health to the municipality.
- ☐ Manage responsible and viable growth while preserving and enhancing the unique rural and small town character of the community.
- ☐ Improve the experiences of individuals, as both citizens and customers, in their interactions with the Town of Essex.
- ☒ Improve the Town's capacity to meet the ongoing and future service needs of its citizens while ensuring the corporation is resilient in the face of unanticipated changes or disruptions.

Section:	Human Resources
Subject:	Hybrid Work Model Policy 1 Year Trial from date of Approval
Policy Number:	HR-03-21
Approval Date:	Approved for One (1) Year Trial
Approved By:	
Prepared By:	Brandi Sieben Manager, Human Resources

1.00 Policy Statement

The Town of Essex endeavours to create the most productive work environment possible while keeping with its vision and mission and values. Work from home arrangements can be used to achieve a productive work environment by improving ability to attract, retain and motivate high-performing and experienced employees, reduce absenteeism and increase employee engagement and job satisfaction.

2.00 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Town of Essex's provisions for work from home arrangements. The contents within the policy are intended to assist employees and managers to understand work from home arrangements, and how to apply and administer consistently across the organization.

It is important to note that the following standard provisions remain throughout the protocol:

- Not all jobs may be suitable for work from home arrangements;
- Organizational and operations requirements will supersede any and all requests.

3.00 Scope

This policy is being trialed for a period of one (1) year and will be reviewed by the Senior Management Team at the end of the trial period. The policy applies to all full-time permanent non-union Town of Essex employees.

4.00 Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy,

"Designated Remote Workplace" is the remote location of the employee working remotely, usually the employee's home or an approved alternate location that is not a municipal facility.

"Employee" means any non-union, regular, full-time staff member.

"Manager" means a non-union employee to whom an employee directly reports to. This could be an Assistant Manager, Superintendent, Manager, Director, or CAO.

"Regular Scheduled Shift" means the continually recurring pattern of work hours established for a job in each work week.

"Self-Certification Checklist" is a document used to ensure the designated remote workplace meets health and safety standards consistent with a typical office environment.

"Senior Management Team" – the Senior Management Team as referred to under this Policy refers to a team consisting of the Chief Administrative Officer, the Director, Corporate Services, Director, Development Services, Director, Infrastructure Services, Town Solicitor/Clerk of the Town of Essex.

"Standard Business Hours" is defined as 8:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday.

"Work from Home" means any arrangement in which an employee performs work at their home, for all or a specified portion of the work week. Work from home arrangements is at the manager's discretion and not an employee benefit or right.

Responsibilities

(i) Employee will:

- i. Request eligibility to work from home by submitting a completed Work from Home Request Form to their Manager.
- ii. Take all reasonable precautions to maintain their health and safety while working at home including reviewing the Working at Home General Safety Guidelines and annually complete the Self-Certification Safety Checklist Form.
- iii. In consultation with their manager, define the designated remote workspace within the employee's home where the employee is expected to work and discuss and address any health and safety concerns.
- iv. Follow the pre-approved work from home schedule, understanding that specific work from home days are not guaranteed, and may change week to week.
- v. Remain self-motivated, well-organized, and self-disciplined in their approach to work.
- vi. Ensures service delivery is seamless to all other parties (internal and external) during standard business hours.
- vii. The employee agrees to be flexible with their time and adjust work hours accordingly to meet business emergencies, demands and requirements.
- viii. An employee must be available by telephone, email or virtual connection during their regular scheduled hours, except for their scheduled lunch or break periods. Any changes to their contact information must be reported to their manager immediately.
- ix. Take all reasonable precautions to ensure the security of confidential information including personal information as defined by the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
- x. Ensure they work their scheduled shift and if requested, and upon request submit a Work Log to their manager at the end of each workday.
- xi. Ensures compliance with the Town's dress code standards.

- xii. Utilizes their web cam/camera for all virtual meetings and Team calls.
- (ii) **Manager or designate will:**
 - i. Responsible for assessing the ability of each employee under their supervision to work from home, taking into consideration their job duties.
 - ii. Annually, approve or deny a request for employee to work from home ensuring the employees eligibility and departmental/divisional coverage.
 - iii. Create a work from home schedule for approved employee(s), that ensures divisional coverage, assess and change schedule as needed.
 - iv. Ensure there is availability of technology to carry out work related duties from the employee work from home location.
 - v. Ensure employees working at home complete the Self-Certification Safety Checklist Form and on an annual basis and forward to Human Resources.
 - vi. Monitor productivity and maintain communication with the employee regardless of employee work arrangements.
 - vii. Ensure other employees are aware of the location and arrangement.
 - viii. Ensure service delivery is seamless to all other parties (internal and external).
 - ix. Ensures the employee is complaint with the terms of the Work from Home Policy.
- (iii) **Director or designate will:**
 - i. In conjunction with the Division Manager's assessment, approve final work from home eligibility for all employees working within their Department.

5.00 Guidelines

Under a work from home arrangement, employees work their regular scheduled shift, outside of a Town of Essex facility, typically in a home office.

Not all jobs or departments are suitable for a work from home arrangement due to the nature of the work performed and operational requirements. Working from home is not a universal employee benefit and any work from home arrangements and schedules must be approved by the Manager with the support of the Director. Work from home arrangements may be cancelled without notice; however, the Town will try to provide

reasonable notice where possible. As working from home is a voluntary choice, employees approved to work from home will be responsible for ensuring they have the right tools and equipment at home to work effectively, efficiently, and safely.

Characteristics of jobs that may be eligible for a work from home arrangement may include jobs:

- i. That are not responsible to provide direct customer service during regular hours of operation.
- ii. That require minimal contact with customers or co-workers, allowing for work to be completed outside the normal hours of operation.
- iii. That are not responsible for the supervision of unionized employees.
- iv. That involve tasks that require a minimum of supervision.
- v. That are project based.

Managers and Directors should consider the following when evaluating a work from home request:

- i. Employees that are considered for work from home must be able to work independently, be self-starters, demonstrate attention to work time and be able to continually meet the productivity requirements of their position.
- ii. The resources that an employee needs to do his/her job must be easily transportable or available electronically.
- iii. Jobs that require physical presence to perform effectively are normally not suitable for work from home.
- iv. Employees who are considered for a work from home arrangement must have an appropriate work area in their homes that considers ergonomics, appropriate equipment, noise and interruption factors. Lighting, internet service, power and temperature control should all be consistent with a typical office environment.
- v. Management may establish additional work rules to support work from home to ensure access, safety and timely completion of work.

- vi. Work from home is not an alternate to child or elder care. If applicable, the employee must make appropriate arrangements for dependent care.
- vii. Employees whose positions that are deemed eligible for work from home arrangements may be approved to work no greater than two (2) occurrences of work from home per work week. An occurrence includes either a full or partial day that is worked from home. Positions that are eligible are not guaranteed two (2) occurrences per week and schedules may change weekly. Any deviation from this policy requires the approval of the CAO.

Health and Safety at Home Workspace

- i. Employees who are approved for a work from home day must have an appropriate work area in their homes that considers ergonomics, appropriate equipment (desk, chair, monitors, etc.), noise and interruption factors. Lighting, internet service, power and temperature control should all be consistent with a typical office environment. Any additional office furniture or equipment that is required to create an at home work area, would be at the cost of the employee. Employees must complete a Self-Certification Safety Checklist with photos of their at home work area, that will be reviewed by their manager and forwarded to Human Resources.
- ii. The Town's liability for job-related accidents will continue to exist during the approved work schedule and in the employee's designated work location since the home office will be considered an extension of the Town's workspace.
- iii. In the case of an injury while working at home, the employee must report the injury to his/her Manager and Human Resources immediately (or as soon as circumstances permit) and complete an Internal Accident/incident Report. An accident investigation will commence.
- iv. A change in an employee's homeowner's insurance or coverage is the responsibility of the employee. Any increases to the employee's home utility costs, including internet costs, are the responsibility of the employee. The Town will not be issuing a T2200 as working from home is not a requirement.

6.00 Confidentiality

Any Town of Essex materials taken home by or sent to the home of the work from home employee shall be kept secure and confidentially and not be accessible to others. Further any and all Town of Essex and /or legislative requirements or obligations as to confidentiality shall remain in effect and extend to the employees' homes.

7.00 Related Policies and Documents

- Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Act.
- Employment Standards Act. (ESA)
- Working from Home General Safety Guidelines
- Code of Conduct for Employees
- Self-Certification Safety Checklist
- Work from Home Request Form

8.00 Acknowledgement and Agreement

I, _____ acknowledge that I have read and understand the Work from home Policy of the Town of Essex.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

CHANGE RECORD LOG

Revision Level	Revision Date	Prepared By: (Position Title)	Approved By: (Position Title)	Description of Change
A	10/19/2021	B. Sieben Manager, HR	D. Sweet CAO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creation of New Policy



Work From Home Request Form

Date of Request:

Employee Name:

Position:

Manager:

Director:

The following Town of Essex documents have been reviewed and signed off:

Work from Home Policy: Yes No Self-Certification Safety Checklist: Yes No

Technology Required (If applicable):

Note: Work from home arrangements should not have a significant financial impact to the Town and all technology requests will need to be reviewed by your Director and the IT Division.

Home work area has been identified and photo(s) provided: Yes No

I have read and understand the Work from Home Policy and Working from Home General Safety Guidelines and agree to the terms and conditions (the fine print below) indicated in this request.

Employee Signature: _____ Manager Signature: _____

Department Director (Approval): _____

The Fine Print

1. This is considered a request until signed off by a Department Director.
2. This is a mutual voluntary work from home agreement that can be amended or discontinued by either party at any time.
3. The current work from home policy has been implemented for a one (1) year term, and there is no guarantee or commitment that the policy will continue following the one (1) year review.
4. Adjustments to work from home arrangements may be required on occasion in order to meet business emergencies, operational demands, project requirements, and learning and development sessions.
5. No work from home arrangements will result in additional expenses or costs to the Town of Essex.
6. The work from home arrangement must be compliant with all legislative requirements including the Employment Standards Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.
7. The work from home arrangement must be compliant with all Town of policies, procedures and guidelines including Work from Home Policy and Privacy & Security.