



SUBJECT:	Telecommuting
POLICY NO:	IX:22
APPLICABLE TO:	All Exempt Employees
PAGE NO:	1 of 4
EFFECTIVE DATE:	September 15, 1993
REVISION DATE:	August 1, 2018 (due to name change)

I. POLICY:

The Hennepin Healthcare Research Foundation (HHRI) considers telecommuting to be an alternative work arrangement in some cases where individual, job and supervisor characteristics are best suited to such an arrangement. Telecommuting allows an employee to work at home, on the road, or in a satellite location for **all of his/her regular workweek**. Telecommuting is a voluntary work alternative that may be appropriate for some employees and some jobs. It is not an entitlement; it is not a company-wide benefit; and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with the HHRI.

Setting up a telecommuting office requires some advance planning to ensure the employee has an adequate workspace and the necessary equipment and supplies, and to ensure that HHRI has reviewed and established the necessary requirements to support an employee working from an alternate site. Important considerations to keep in mind when planning the telecommuting workspace are:

- The work area must be quiet and free of distractions.
- Lighting must be adequate and without glare. (HHRI will not pay for reconstruction of the employee's home to develop a home office or of an alternative work location.)
- Distracting noise should be kept to a minimum.
- Your desk must be adequately designed to safely accommodate the equipment you must use (computer keyboard, etc.).
- Comfortable chair with adequate back support (HHRI will not provide furniture for employee's alternate office location).
- Equipment--Computer, fax, printer, etc.,--must be available for **your exclusive use while telecommuting** and must be compatible with the equipment used at HHRI.
- Each employee must make arrangements with his/her supervisor regarding the use of HHRI-owned equipment in the employee's alternate work location, but in no event may the use of such equipment impede HHRI access to such equipment, nor change HHRI's ownership of such equipment. The employee will be responsible for the costs of installation of necessary connections and communications software.
- Supplies--The employee is responsible for purchasing their own office supplies (paper, print cartridges, etc.) necessary for work performed at home. Supplies must be purchased through an HHRI approved vendor in order to be paid for by HHRI.

Be aware that HHRI is not responsible for insuring your equipment in your home. If you are using your own equipment and it breaks while performing work for HHRI, HHRI is **not** liable.

II. PROCEDURE:

1. Either an employee or a supervisor can suggest telecommuting as a possible work arrangement.
2. For purposes of this policy, telecommuting is defined as working from an alternative location – defined as their primary work location - for **all of an employee's regular workweek**. This

policy is not intended for the temporary/short term work from home or on the road business travel. ***For informal, short term work arrangements, refer to policy IX:08 Employees Working at Home or Taking Work Home.*** Such informal arrangements are not the focus of this policy.

3. Individuals requesting formal telecommuting arrangements must have been employed with HHRI for a minimum of 12 months of continuous, regular employment and must have exhibited above average performance, in accordance with the company's performance appraisal process.
4. Any telecommuting arrangement made will be on a trial basis for the first 3 months, and may be discontinued, at will, at any time at the request of either the telecommuter or the organization.
5. Prior to any out-of-state telecommuting arrangements being made, the supervisor and employee must work with HR/Finance to ensure the appropriate contracts are in place (i.e. Workers' Compensation, Unemployment, Medical/Dental Insurance, etc.). HHRI reserves the right to deny such an arrangement.
6. HHRI will determine, with information supplied by the employee and the supervisor, the appropriate equipment needs (including hardware, software, phone and data lines, facsimile equipment or software, photocopiers, etc.) for each telecommuting arrangement on a case-by-case basis. The human resource and information system departments (HHRI, CDRG or HCMC IT, depending on which network is required) will serve as resources in this matter. Equipment supplied by the organization will be maintained by the organization, as determined by the appropriate IT department (i.e. next-day onsite hardware support, help desk for software issues, etc.). Equipment supplied by the employee, if deemed appropriate by the organization, will be maintained by the employee, in an approved manner. HHRI accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment. HHRI reserves the right to make determinations as to appropriate equipment, subject to change at any time. Equipment supplied by the organization is to be used for business purposes only. The telecommuter must sign an inventory of all office property and agree to take appropriate action to protect the items from damage or theft. Upon termination of employment all company property will be returned to the company and software licensed by HHRI will be verifiably uninstalled from non-HHRI computers, unless other arrangements have been made.
7. Consistent with the organization's expectations of information asset security for employees working at the office full-time, telecommuting employees will be expected to ensure the protection of proprietary company and customer information accessible from their alternate office location. No file sharing with other home computers are allowed. Additional steps include, but are not limited to, use of locked file cabinets, disk boxes and desks, regular password maintenance, and any other steps appropriate for the job and the environment.
8. The employee will establish an appropriate work environment within their alternate office location for work purposes. HHRI will not be responsible for costs associated with initial setup of the employee's alternate office location such as remodeling, furniture or lighting, nor for repairs

or modifications to the alternate office location space. Employees will be offered appropriate assistance in setting up a work station designed for safe, comfortable work.

9. After equipment has been delivered, a designated representative of HHRI may visit the employee's alternate office location to inspect for possible work hazards and suggest modifications. Repeat inspections will occur on an as-needed basis. These visits/inspections will be conducted in the most economical and efficient manner, and due to location, may not necessarily be done in person and may be accomplished via photos, webcam or other means that are appropriate.
10. Injuries sustained by the employee while at their alternate office location and in conjunction with their regular work duties are normally covered by the company's workers' compensation policy. Telecommuting employees are responsible for notifying the employer of such injuries in accordance with company worker's compensation procedures. The employee is liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to their work site.
11. The employee and manager will agree on the work schedule the employee will customarily maintain, and the manner and frequency of communication. The employee agrees to be accessible by phone or email within a reasonable time period during the agreed upon work schedule.
12. Before entering into any telecommuting agreement, the employee and manager, with the assistance of the human resource department, will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement. The following factors will be considered in determining employee eligibility to telecommute, but assessment shall not be limited to these:
 - Positive/negative effects on customer service, unit, supervisor, division and department.
 - Cost effectiveness/Allowability/Limitations on Sponsored Programs
 - Needs of the department/division
 - Unit responsibilities
 - Job responsibilities - determine if the job is appropriate for a telecommuting arrangement
 - Employee's job performance, work habits, and compliance with work rules
 - Employee's work skills, including organizational & time management, self-motivation, reliability, ability to work independently, and ability to solve basic hardware and software problems.
 - Equipment needs, work space design considerations and scheduling issues.
 - Tax and other legal implications for the business use of the employee's home based on IRS and state and local government restrictions. Responsibility for fulfilling all obligations in this area rests solely with the employee.
13. If the employee and manager agree, and the human resource department concurs, a draft telecommuting agreement will be prepared and signed by all parties and a 3 month trial period will commence. If the direct supervisor has reason to deny an employee's request to work at an alternate location, the direct supervisor will provide that decision in writing, stating the reason for denial. The employee may request the supervisor's supervisor/manager review the decision.

14. Evaluation of telecommuter performance during the trial period will include daily and weekly interaction by phone and e-mail between the employee and the manager to discuss work progress and problems. At the conclusion of the trial period, the employee and manager will each complete an evaluation of the arrangement and make recommendations for continuance or modifications. Evaluation of telecommuter performance beyond the trial period will be consistent with that received by employees working at the office in both content and frequency but will focus on work output and completion of objectives rather than time-based performance.
15. An appropriate level of communication between the telecommuter and supervisor will be agreed to as part of the discussion process and will be more formal during the trial period. After conclusion of the trial period, the manager and telecommuter will communicate at a level consistent with employees working at the office or in a manner and frequency that seems appropriate for the job and the individuals involved.
16. Telecommuting is **not designed to be a replacement for appropriate child care**. Although an individual employee's schedule may be modified to accommodate child care needs, the focus of the arrangement must remain on job performance and meeting business demands. Prospective telecommuters are encouraged to discuss expectations of telecommuting with family members
17. The availability of telecommuting as a flexible work arrangement for employees of HHRI can be discontinued at any time at the discretion of the employer. Every effort will be made to provide 30 days' notice of such a change to accommodate commuting, child care and other problems that may arise from such a change. There may be instances, however, where no notice is possible.