

MEDICINE HAT & DISTRICT HEALTH FOUNDATION

Policy and Procedure Manual	Title: Telecommuting Policy	
	Section: Board of Directors	Reference Number: IV.2019.004

Objective

Telecommuting allows employees to work at home, on the road or in a satellite location for all or part of their workweek. The Medicine Hat & District Health Foundation considers telecommuting to be a viable, flexible work option when both the employee and the job are suited to such an arrangement. Telecommuting may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not for others. Telecommuting is not an entitlement, it is not a companywide benefit, and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with the Health Foundation.

Procedures

Telecommuting can be informal, such as working from home for a short-term project or on the road during business travel, or a formal, set schedule of working away from the office as described below. Either an employee or the Executive Director can suggest telecommuting as a possible work arrangement.

Any telecommuting arrangement made will be on a trial basis for the first three months and may be discontinued at will and at any time at the request of either the telecommuter or the organization. Every effort will be made to provide 30 days' notice of such change to accommodate commuting, childcare and other issues that may arise from the termination of a telecommuting arrangement. There may be instances, however, when no notice is possible.

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Eligibility

Individuals requesting formal telecommuting arrangements must be employed with the Health Foundation for a minimum of 6 months of continuous, regular employment and must have a satisfactory performance record.

Before entering into any telecommuting agreement, the employee and Executive Director, will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement, reviewing the following areas:

- Employee suitability. The employee and Executive Director will assess the needs and work habits of the employee, compared to traits customarily recognized as appropriate for successful telecommuters.
- Job responsibilities. The employee and Executive Director will discuss the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a telecommuting arrangement.
- Equipment needs, workspace design considerations and scheduling issues. The employee and Executive Director will review the physical workspace needs and the appropriate location for the telework.
- Tax and other legal implications. The employee must determine any tax or legal implications and local government laws, and/or restrictions of working out of a home-based office. Responsibility for fulfilling all obligations in this area rests solely with the employee.

If the employee and Executive Director agree, a draft telecommuting agreement will be prepared and signed by all parties, and a three-month trial period will commence.

Evaluation of telecommuter performance during the trial period will include regular interaction by phone and e-mail between the employee and the Executive Director, and weekly face-to-face meetings to discuss work progress and problems. At the end of the trial period, the employee and Executive Director will each complete an evaluation of the arrangement and make recommendations for continuance or modifications.

An appropriate level of communication between the telecommuter and the Executive Director 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 is appropriate for the job and the individuals involved.

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Ad Hoc Arrangements

Temporary telecommuting arrangements may be approved for circumstances such as inclement weather, special projects or business travel. These arrangements are approved on an as-needed basis only, with no expectation of ongoing continuance.

Other informal, short-term arrangements may be made for employees on family or medical leave to the extent practical for the employee and the organization and with the consent of the employee's health care provider, if appropriate.

All informal telecommuting arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the business needs of the organization.

Security

Consistent with the organization's expectations of information security for employees working at the office, telecommuting employees will be expected to ensure the protection of proprietary company and donor information accessible from their home office. Steps include the use of locked file cabinets and desks, regular password maintenance, and any other measures appropriate for the job and the environment.

Tips to maintain Productivity & Wellness

- Keep structure with a morning routine or team / manager check-in
- Mimic your typical eating and lunch cycles
- Move around – Consider a walk around the block midday while listening to a podcast to energize and break up work (We can recommend tons of philanthropy related podcasts)
- Dress in work attire and wear your shoes – The body is funny and responds to clothing triggers
- Create a separate designated 'work' area – Defining spaces can help you avoid the distraction monsters that await in every corner of your house

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Medicine Hat & District Health Foundation Work from Home Guidelines and Policy

Workspace

- **Identify a designated workspace in your home** that can be used for professional video conferencing. Ideally you have a clean background where your facial expressions can be seen clearly without visible clutter or mess. Desks and tables can work great. Windows can look good but often produce less than ideal lighting conditions during certain times of the day. House plants make excellent backdrops (basketball hoops do not).
- **Dress appropriately and professionally for client video conferencing** as you would if you were going into the office. Avoid baggy t-shirts, hoodies, or other gear that may give an overly laid-back or casual impression to our clients. We trust your judgement!
- **Make sure you have a strong and consistent internet connection** and headphones with built-in microphone, especially if you're co-working with others in your home. Make sure you're using a secure Wi-Fi connection and avoid using public networks that can be easily hacked. Follow-up with your IT support if you need particular technology or equipment.

Overall Availability

- All Health Foundation employees are expected to conduct business as usual and be available during standard office hours from **[8AM to 4:15PM]**, averaging **[37 hours]** per week.
- Standard team communication should be carried out according to typical team communications norms:

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- Internal day-to-day comms: **Slack** for group conversations and threads.
- External partner comms: **Email**
- Face-to-Face meetings: Video chatting tools like **Zoom, Microsoft Teams or Skype**
- Urgent questions: Mobile texting could be used if chat response is not achieved within a reasonable time frame (e.g. 1 hour) during working hours.
- Turn on chat and email notifications to ensure important communications from your colleagues and clients are not missed.
- Take breaks as you would in the office. Please just use your chat status as an away notification to let your colleagues know when you are away from your computer for any extended period of time.
- Don't forget to stand up and move around throughout the day. It can be easy to pass the whole day clicking away at your computer, which isn't good for your mental health or your productivity in the long-run. Force yourself to move around and get some fresh air.
- Consider scheduling daily 10 minute check-ins with your manager or weekly internal project meetings to ensure the clearest lines of communications and expectations for each of your projects and team workflow. Use your judgement to determine what will best serve your project and team success, and implement accordingly.

Email

- Please check in on email as you would normally throughout the day. Prioritize any team communications or questions. These should receive a written response within **[24 hours]**.

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- If you forward an important email that requires a follow-up action and do not see a response, additionally please follow-up directly with that person via chat.

Chat (e.g. Slack)

- Pay close attention to **[Slack]** as main mode of internal communication amongst your team mates. Respond to colleague questions / requests within **[2 hours]** during business hours.
- Make use of statuses to keep colleagues aware of times you may be busy or away from your computer / communications:

Set a status



 What's your status?



In a meeting – 1 hour



Lunch / break – 1 hour



Out sick – Today



Vacationing – Don't clear



Working remotely – Today

[Edit suggestions for Whole Whale](#)

Save

Video (e.g. Zoom)

- Add a video dial-in link to all scheduled meetings ahead of time, including manager check-ins and internal collaborations.
- Show up for your colleagues and turn on your video as much as is reasonable. Test your video and sound ahead of time to ensure your equipment is working properly.

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- Find a quiet place to video chat and be cognizant of any background noise that you might be experiencing. Use mute liberally when not speaking.

Signatures/Approvals:

_____	Board Chair	_____
Name	Title	Date
Heather Bach	Executive Director	_____
Name	Title	Date