

SECTION 11 USE OF CITY PROPERTY

All staff members are responsible for the safekeeping and proper care of all property used by them and belonging to the City. Property shall only be used for official purposes and in the capacity for which it was designed.

City employees shall have no expectation of privacy in any property or equipment of the City, including, but not limited to, offices, cubicles, desks, files, vehicles, filing cabinets, voice mail, text messages on City-paid cellular telephones, PDAs, computers, laptops, ~~tablets, desk phones, mass storage devices,~~ e-mails, electronic media/~~or~~ devices of any kind, or any other type of equipment, property, or space provided by the City. Except when accessed by the Police Department for law enforcement purposes, any such property or equipment may be accessed by the City at any time, for any purpose, with or without notice to the employee, and with or without reasonable suspicion.

11.1 Public Information

All staff members shall become familiar with- and must comply with- all applicable laws dealing with public and non-public information. Misuse and improper disclosure of public or non-public information is prohibited and may result in discipline, up to and including ~~immediate~~ termination.

11.2 Telephone Use

~~The P~~proper use of telephone communication is required. Always use a answer the telephone with a professional tone of voice pleasant voice and respond politely to the caller. Personal telephone calls must be brief and treat others with a proper level of respect and professionalism. Voicemail messages should be returned as soon as possible or within one business day. In the event that additional response time is needed, a courtesy call should be made to acknowledge the callers message and timeframe for following up. Frequent personal use of the telephone ~~for other than City business~~ is not permitted and may result in discipline, up to and including ~~immediate~~ termination.

11.3 Information Technology Policy

Purpose

The purpose of the city of Ramsey IT Policy is to set standards to protect the City's IT systems from business interruption, unauthorized or inappropriate access, and to maintain appropriate network security. The policy is to be adhered to by all users (~~full-time, part-time, and temporary employees, vendors, consultants, volunteers, interns, and others~~) who have access to or use ~~the city of any~~ Ramsey IT systems both on-premise or remote and ~~off City property~~. IT systems include, but are not limited to, computers, e-mail, Internet access, printers, phones, mobile devices and various software, etc. -

Violations

Violations of this policy will be addressed consistent with the City's Personnel Policy or union contract and may include disciplinary action, up to and including ~~immediate~~ termination.

Exceptions

Exceptions to the following policy ~~will must~~ be ~~reviewed-made~~ on a case-by-case basis ~~and only after review~~ by the Department Head ~~and IT Manager followed by~~ ~~and~~ approval ~~d~~ by the City Administrator.

Glossary of Terms

~~**Configuration:** The way a system is set up or the assortment of components that make up the system. Configuration can refer to either hardware or software or both.~~

~~**Downloads:** To copy data from a main source to a computer or mobile device.~~

Electronic Mail (e-mail): A network application that allows users to exchange messages over communications networks with others users.

~~**File Server:** An enhanced computer with network operating software that is used for file storage, application functionality, and managing network resources.~~

~~**Information Technology (IT):** Managing and processing information.~~

Information Technology (IT) Systems: Includes, but not limited to; computers, printers, software applications, e- mail, Internet, telephone, ~~voice mail~~, cell phones, wifi, etc.

Pass phrase: A longer password that can include all written characters including spaces. Passphrases are usually easier to remember, and, due to their length, are more secure.

~~**Internet:** A global network connecting millions of computers.~~

~~**Intranet:** A website or series of sites accessible only within an organization. An intranet 's Web sites look and act just like any other web site, but firewall security restricts unauthorized access.~~

~~**Local Area Network (LAN)**—A localized computer network.~~

~~**Licensing:** Legal compliancy of assets. **Passphrase:** A longer password that can include all written characters including spaces. Passphrases are usually easier to remember, and, due to their length, are more secure.~~

Social Networking Sites: Sites which focus on building online communities of people who share interests and activities and /or exploring the interests and activities of others. Examples of social networking websites include: Facebook, Linked InSnapchat, Twitter, ~~and sites that allow users to post personal blogs~~, etc.

Software: Software includes the operating system and all utilities that enable the computer to function. Application software includes programs that do real work for users (i.e. word processors, spreadsheets, and database management systems).

~~**Portable Equipment:** Hardware that is small and lightweight (i.e. laptop computers, hand-held computers, tablets, smart phones, Blackberrys, projectors, digital cameras, etc).~~

~~**Users:** Full-time, part-time, and temporary employees, vendors, consultants, volunteers, interns, and others who have been granted access to the City's Information Technology Systems. Persons that utilize any IT systems, applications, devices, or other city-managed technologies.~~

Information Technology Use

Purpose

~~To i~~Inform and provide direction to all users regarding appropriate usage and management of the City's IT systems and resources. All users must be authorized to use City IT systems by their Department Head, supervisor, and IT. All users must complete annual security training to maintain access to IT systems. Failure to complete training could result in revoked access for the user until training is complete, and possibly disciplinary action. All users must be authorized to use City IT systems by their Department Head, supervisor, or IT.

Auditing

The city of Ramsey reserves the right to monitor and audit use of its IT systems at any time without the user's consent. An audit may result in the removal of hardware and/or software not compliant with this policy, revocation of permission to use the City's IT systems, employee discipline, up to and including: ~~immediate~~ termination, and/or criminal charges, depending on the nature of the violation.

Reporting

Users should notify their immediate supervisor, the IT Manager, Human Resources, or the City Administrator upon learning of violations of this policy.

Expectation of Privacy

As discussed above, all City-owned equipment and Information Technology Systems, including e-mail, are City property and subject to inspection by the City at any time, without notice, and for any reason or no reason at all. Users should have no expectation of privacy. In addition, the City is subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and other laws governing the collection, storage, use, and disclosure of data. All files and documents, including personal messages and internet logs, created, received, collected, or generated by City employees or using the City's Information Technology Systems are subject to those laws and may be disclosed in certain circumstances without the permission of the employee or user.

Violation of Policy

Violations of this policy will be addressed consistent with the City's Personnel Policy or union contract and may include revocation of permission to use the City's IT systems, discipline up to and including ~~immediate termination,~~ revocation of permission to use the City's IT systems, and/or criminal charges, depending on the nature of the violation.

Hardware and Software Acquisition

The IT Manager must approve all hardware and software prior to acquisition to ensure consistency with the design and architecture of the City's IT network with zero exceptions. Users are prohibited from installing, downloading, purchasing, or acquiring both hardware and software, including product demonstrations, without prior approval from the IT Manager. Software applications not required for official City business are strictly prohibited. Attempts by employees to manipulate City hardware, networking systems, security systems or appliances, or licensed software or apps, outside of approved updates, may result in corrective disciplinary action.

Installation ~~and~~, Downloads, ~~and~~ Configuration

~~No user will be allowed to manipulate hardware and software standard configurations. The IT Manager must be contacted for hardware and software support. No user should change the computer setup or configuration files. Customizing a computer should be limited to items including City owned software such as wallpaper, screen savers, icons, toolbars and colors. Users are prohibited from downloading, or installing any software including personal, through the Internet, e-mail, and/or vendor demonstrations without prior approval from the IT Department. Installation or download of unapproved programs can potentially damage files, a user's PC, or infect systems city-wide, which could cause cessation of daily operations. Users are expected to coordinate with IT when new software is needed; so that said software can be vetted, licensed, and maintained. In order to maintain optimal functioning system security, users are encouraged to accept updates pushed out by IT to currently authorized programs such as Adobe Acrobat, Microsoft Office, and other previously installed software.~~

Licensing

To ensure license compliancy all software must be purchased by and licensed to the City.

- a. Development: Any software programs (i.e. custom designed Microsoft Access databases, etc.) developed for use by the City becomes the property of the City. Software programs may not be sold or distributed without prior approval.
- b. Home: City-owned software may not be loaded on non-City owned equipment unless there is prior approval of the Department Head and the IT Manager.
- c. Copyright Laws: City users are required to abide by software and documentation copyright laws and licensing agreements. Question about the legality of the software and documentation should be directed to the IT Manager. At no time should any users make copies of City-owned software and documentation. To prove legal ownership of software, the City must have the original media and manuals stored on City property. The IT Manager will periodically check for software that may be in violation of the above policy.

Data Management and Protection

- a. Under the provisions of the Minnesota Data Practices Act, all data stored on computer media owned, leased, or rented by the City is considered to be owned by the City is subject to the Minnesota Data Practices Act, which governs its use and dissemination and data

classification. All data is also subject to review and investigation at the discretion of the City Administrator, Department Heads, IT Manager, and/or law enforcement. The City Clerk should be contacted with questions regarding the classification of public and private data.

- b. Data Ownership: All information developed or introduced to a City technology system by a user in conjunction with employment with the City is the property of the City.
- c. Data Storage: All City data must be saved to a network drive on a City server.
- d. Data Deletion: Users are responsible for deleting outdated files that are no longer needed for compliance with of the City Records Retention Schedule; this includes data files and e- mail messages. The City Clerk should be contacted with questions regarding the City Records Retention Schedule.
- e. Data Back-up: ~~The IT department backs~~ Backups are performed on up all data stored on the file servers. Workstation hard drives or any other devices are not backed up. Data stored on local machines are the responsibility of the user.

Portable Information Systems

~~Portable personal Laptop~~ computer(s), ~~digital cameras,~~ ~~tablets~~~~projectors,~~ and other City-owned portable equipment ~~can may~~ be used for City business, outside of City facilities. When users check out portable equipment devices, like those mentioned, are in the hands of employees, they are expected to provide appropriate “common sense” protection against theft, accidental breakage, environmental damage and other risks. Desktop computers, desk phones, and other attached devices are not to be removed from City buildings. The user is responsible for the backup of or loss of any data stored on the standalone or portable computer. IT staff is available to assist in the development of procedures for disaster recovery of portable units.

City Issued Cellular Phones

- ~~a. City issued cellular telephones are intended for the use by City employees in the conduct of their official City work to perform services to Ramsey citizens and businesses. Department Heads are responsible for the cellular telephones assigned to their departments, determining service levels for their employees, and exercising discretion in their use. Department Heads may acquire cell or smart phones for employee use when the expense and use of the cell phones is justifiable in terms of improved service and responsiveness to citizens or other employees. Department Heads are responsible for that justification, both initially and ongoing. Cell phones should be provided only when they are required for the employee to perform required functions of their job. Simple convenience is not an adequate justification. All cell phones used for city business may be subject being placed into a Mobile Device Management system (MDM), to be centrally managed, set up, protected, and erased by IT Staff. Employees will manage their cell phone use so as not to exceed their service level as approved by their supervisor. Occasional overages will be reviewed by the supervisor on a case by case basis. After a review of the monthly billing~~

~~statement, employees may be required to reimburse the City for overages in cell use and/or texts, depending on the nature of the calls/texts made during the month. Employees will make an effort to utilize other methods before utilizing cellular minutes. Nothing in this policy will limit Department Head discretion to allow reasonable and prudent use of such telephones or equipment provided that:~~

~~Its use in no way limits the conduct of work of the employee or other employees
No personal profit is gained or outside employment is served~~

A Department Head may authorize ~~an employees~~ to voluntarily use their own personal phone for City business at the employees own expense.

- ~~b. and be reimbursed by the City for those calls. An employee will not be reimbursed for business related calls without prior authorization from his or her Department Head. Department Heads may also prohibit employees from carrying their own personal cell phones during working hours if it interferes with the performance of their job duties.~~

Use of public resources by City employees for personal gain and/or private use including, but not limited to ~~;~~ outside employment or political campaign purposes, is prohibited. Incidental and occasional personal use may be permitted with the consent of the ~~department director and~~ direct supervisor, but personal calls made and received should be done only when it doesn't interfere in work duties. Personal calls made by employees on a City-provided cellular phone will be made or received only when absolutely necessary and when they do not interfere with working operations and should be completed as quickly as possible. Department Heads may prohibit employees from carrying their own personal cell phones during working hours if it interferes with the performance of their job duties.

- ~~c. A concern of the City is the personal safety of employees and the public at large. Therefore, e~~Employees should use proper safety procedures at all times when using a cell phone, but especially while operating equipment, driving on City business, or performing similar duties. City employees should only use a cell phone while operating a motor vehicle as permitted by Minnesota State law. (Pending feedback from Safety Consultant).

~~d. The Administrator, or designee, will have primary responsibility for implementation and coordination of this policy.~~ All Department Heads and supervisors will be responsible for enforcement of this policy within their departments and divisions.

Smart Phones/Mobile Hot Spots/Tablets

Department Heads ~~The city may at its discretion provide said devices to~~ members of staff as it deems appropriate needed. Department Heads are responsible for justification, both initially and ongoing.

Electronic Mail (e-mail)/SMS (text) Messaging

- a. ~~The City e-mail system and City owned or issued cellular phones are tools to be used for matters directly related to the business activities of the City and as a means to provide~~

~~services that are efficient, accurate, timely and complete.~~ E-mail messages and texts are subject to regulation under the Minnesota Data Practices Act. The content of the message determines whether a message is public or non-public/private. ~~E-mail is~~ Both methods are intended as a medium of communication, not for information storage; therefore, ~~e-mail neither~~ should ~~not~~ be used for the permanent storage or maintenance of official City records or other City information. ~~Users may receive inappropriate and unsolicited e-mail messages. Any such messages should be reported immediately to the IT department.~~

Inappropriate non-business use of the City e-mail system and cellular phones includes, but is not limited to; the transmission of non-business audio, graphic or movie files; games; jokes; ~~instant messaging;~~ chain emails; content of an offensive, indecent, or pornographic nature; copyrighted material and large data files not directly related to City business. These items must not be sent or accepted as e-mail attachments. These types of files can ~~adversely affect the network or computer performance~~ decrease performance or even pose a security risk. Users may report any inappropriate or unsolicited e-mail messages to the IT department by taking a screenshot or via phone.

- b. Users must practice the utmost respect while texting and may not use text messaging, e-mails, or other forms of communication provided or authorized by the City to harass another employee, citizen or other individual. Such actions are “Textual harassment” is considered harassment and is subject to investigation and disciplinary action as described in the Anti-harassment Policy.
- c. The City retains the right to use management software to eliminate the delivery of junk e-mail (SPAM), ~~including e-mails that contain profanity.~~, marketing emails, phishing emails and, emails containing profanity, etc., without any notice.

Internet ~~World Wide Web~~

- a. The Internet is available to users for research, education, and communications directly related to the mission, charter, or work tasks of the City. Users must honor copyright laws regarding protected commercial software or intellectual property. Users accessing the Internet through the City’s IT systems should minimize unnecessary network traffic that might interfere with the ability of others to make effective use of this shared network resource. Users are responsible for adhering to City standards when browsing the Internet. Failure to adhere to City standards puts the City and the individual at risk for legal or financial liabilities, potential embarrassment and other consequences, including immediate termination of employment or other disciplinary actions.
- b. The City retains the right to use management software to monitor end user activity. This software may monitor and limit Internet activity.

Prohibited Use

This list includes, but is not limited to illegal activities; profit or commercial activities; outside employment; any other public office or employment which is incompatible with City employment responsibilities, as determined by the City Administrator; wagering, betting, or selling chances; annoying or harassing other individuals; fund-raising, except for City approved activities; any political or religious activities; unethical activities;

pornographic, obscene, or indecent images or content; forwarding of junk e-mail, advertisements, and/or chain email.

Personal Use

- a. The city of Ramsey offers users the privilege of personal use of its technology. Personal use is allowed under the following guidelines listed below and only during break times or before/after normal business hours, as follows: Users must obtain approval from their immediate supervisor prior to personal use of IT systems; only City users are to use the computers and computer-related peripherals; users must use their own media (flash drives, CD's) and paper. No personal files or data are to be stored on the City ~~file servers~~network; users must not use IT systems for items listed above in Prohibited Use.
- b. E-mail: E-mail may, on a very limited basis, be used for personal correspondence, as long as it does not interfere with the normal duties of the employee and the above-listed guidelines are followed. Using the City Internet e-mail to participate in any kind personal listservs or broadcast mailing list is prohibited.
- ~~c. Inappropriate non-business use of e-mail and the Internet can cause a burden on resources or carry computer viruses. Examples of this includes, but is not limited to: the transmission of non-business audio, graphic or movie files; games; jokes; instant messaging; content of an offensive or pornographic nature; copyrighted material and large data files not directly related to business. These items must not be downloaded from the Internet. These types of files can be large and affect the network or computer performance or carry viruses.~~
- ~~d.c.~~ Desk Telephones: Desk telephones may be used for short, infrequent personal use as long as it does not interfere with the normal duties of the employee and the above guidelines are followed. Employees must pay any costs associated with personal long distance calls within 30 days.
- ~~e.d.~~ Copiers, Fax Machines, Printers: Users will reimburse the city of Ramsey for personal copies, faxes, and print requests, at the rate listed in the City fee schedule. Personal use fees must be reimbursed within 24 hours from the date the expense was incurred.

Personal Social Networking on City-owned equipment

Individuals must not use City-owned or operated equipment to post to personal sites, including social networking sites, except during break times or before/after work.

Personal Social Networking while off duty and the City's Responsibility:

they

The city of Ramsey has a duty to protect the reputation of the organization and its employees as well as guard against any liability and potential legal risk regardless of when and where social networking activity occurs. With this in mind, employees must use social media in a manner that follows the following guidelines: individuals should exercise caution and good judgment when ~~social networking on social networking~~ sites/apps; individuals shall not represent that they are speaking or acting on behalf of the

city of Ramsey or presenting any interests of the city of Ramsey; individuals are not permitted to display the city of Ramsey logo on any part of their online profiles; individuals never have the right to post non-public and confidential information such as information related to coworkers without first obtaining the individuals' express written consent, personnel data, medical information, or claims or lawsuits against the City; individuals who use personal social media accounts are not immune from the law.

In general, all users of social networking should be aware that the content of these social networking sites can be subpoenaed and used in criminal and civil trials. Individuals need to be aware that they have no reasonable expectation of privacy when social networking and use of personal social media accounts are subject to all pertinent city of Ramsey policies, as well as local, state and federal laws. Content that violates existing City policies that exhibit hate, bias, discrimination, pornography, libelous or otherwise defamatory content will not be tolerated. Individuals are prohibited from using social networking sites to harass or attack others, including those who work for the city of Ramsey.

City Facebook page or other City social networking sites:

- a. Authorized city staff responsible for updating social media sites must use the greatest care to portray the City in the possible best light.
- b. If the author of a given post is quoting another individual's comments, the comments must be called out as a quote with quotation marks.
- c. In general, all posts should be reviewed by a supervisor and communications staff, if there is any doubt regarding the look, feel or interpretation of said post, staff shall have the post reviewed by the City Administrator before proceeding.
- d. All posts to the City's social media sites and other official City publications must comply with these policies.

Information Technology Security

Purpose

Ensure secure, protect, and allow only appropriate access to city of Ramsey IT systems and resources.

Logins and Passwords

All users must use and maintain unique IT-issued login IDs/login credentials for computer and network-related access. Login IDs/These are credentials are not to be shared with others, and corresponding passwords must remain confidential. Multi-user or generic login IDs are permissible only in special circumstances approved and maintained by IT. User passwords/login credentials must adhere to the following requirements set forth by the Logis Member Security Policy. Password requirements are shown at computer login screens. Longer passphrases can be used to increase the change interval.:

○ Have a minimum of at least six alphanumeric characters in length Passphrases of 20 characters or more are exempt from some complexity requirements, and can be renewed once every 365 days.

○ Must be changed every 90 days

- ~~Have at least one numeric digit as well as letters, for example: 1FishTwoFish~~
- ~~Have not been previously used in the last five password rotations~~
- ~~Automatic screen lock is initiated after 15 minutes of inactivity.~~

Appropriate network access shall be assigned by the IT department to each user ~~login ID, and, users may only log into computers and equipment with their assigned login ID.~~ Passwords Login credentials are not to be shared with anyone, ~~and will be forced to change periodically.~~ New passwords should not be easily guessed items, such as: birthdays, family names, pet names, etc. ~~It is in an employee's best interest that Any employee who if they~~ forgets their password or suspects that their password's security has been compromised, ~~they~~ should contact the IT department immediately.

Physical Security

- a. City users are expected to provide reasonable security to their computer workstations and related IT equipment. This includes ensuring that passwords are not written down in accessible places, removable media must be kept in a secured area, and that confidential data is not displayed in such a manner that unauthorized personnel can view it.
- b. All IT equipment is City property and ~~must remain on current premises.~~ Users may not move IT equipment outside of its assigned area without prior approval from the IT department. ~~Designated p~~Portable equipment, such as projectors, laptop computers, and digital cameras, may be removed from City buildings only for City business by employees only. ~~Portable equipment must be reserved and checked out only to City users.~~ Users are expected to provide appropriate “common sense” protection against theft, breakage, environmental damage, and other risks.
- c. Users are required to log off computer workstations when absent for an extended time, such as end of day. Users may, however, “lock” their workstation instead when absent for a short period of time, such as during a meeting or over lunch. All computers will lock after 15 minutes of inactivity.

Virus Protection

All computer workstations, laptops, and servers must be protected from viruses using up-to-date antivirus software. Users may not alter their system's configuration or take other steps to defeat ~~virus protection devices~~security applications, appliances, or systems. All files on removable media must be scanned for viruses prior to installation onto or access from City computer equipment. It is an employees' responsibility to report Any files suspected or known to contain files, malicious actors, phishing emails, or viruses must be immediately reported to the IT department for proper handling.

Wireless Access

Unauthorized wireless access into the City's computer network is strictly prohibited. Wireless access is defined as, but not limited to, 802.11 (Wi-Fi), Bluetooth, ~~WiMax,~~ and cellular technologies. Users may not attempt to scan, connect to, or install any wireless computing device on City equipment or property. Wireless access must be

authorized and configured by the City's IT department. Any authorized wireless access must utilize standards-based encryption, and conform to adopted security practices as governed by LOGIS and/or state and federal government guidelines.

Artificial Intelligence

Approved use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools within the City of Ramsey will be approved by the IT Manager and City Administrator. Upon approval, employees may use low-risk data with AI technology tools to perform work-related tasks. Low-risk data is defined by Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13 as "Public" and is intended to be available to the public. Employees are to assume that developers of AI tools will retain all data entered into the tool. Sharing of medium or high-risk data, could be considered a data breach, and may be subject to disciplinary action. Employees who ~~If you~~ are unsure whether the data you enter into AI applications is classified as public data, consult the City Clerk or IT Manager. All data created with the use of AI is to be retained in accordance with the City's records retention schedule.

11.4 Vehicle Use Policy

This policy applies to all employees who drive a vehicle on city business, whether driving a city-owned vehicle or their own personal vehicle. The city expects all employees who are required to drive as part of their job to drive safely and legally while on city business and to maintain a good driving record.

The city will examine driving records once per year for all employees who are covered by this policy to determine compliance with this policy. Employees who lose their driver's license or receive restrictions on their license are required to notify their immediate supervisor, who will then notify Human Resources, on the first workday after any temporary, pending or permanent action is taken on their license and to keep their supervisor informed of any changes thereafter. The city will determine appropriate action on a case-by-case basis.

~~Staff members shall operate City vehicles in a careful and prudent manner and shall obey all laws of the state and all City orders pertaining to such operation. Staff members shall set a proper example for others when operating City vehicles. Any City employee who drives a City vehicle regularly or occasionally in order to conduct City business, must promptly report loss or suspension of a driver's license to their Department Head.~~

The intent of this policy is to ensure appropriate use of City vehicles by municipal employees and to ensure a clear understanding thereof.

- a. Work related cConferences, schools, seminars and meetings: For purposes of this policy it is intended that Ttraining opportunities during the regular work shift within a 40-mile distance of the work location is considered an acceptable work-related activity in as much as the vehicle will be returned to the work site either during or shortly after the completion of the shift.

- b. Out-of-town and overnight conferences and schools: For travel which has a duration of more than one work day in length, ~~or for travel beyond the 40-mile radius noted above,~~ the employee is to utilize a non-fleet vehicle, the use for which will be compensated at the approved rate. Alternatively, upon prior approval of the City Administrator, the employee can receive the use of a vehicle previously determined as an excess vehicle by the City Council.
- c. Lunch hours and authorized breaks: For purposes of this policy when an employee is scheduled to work at a site other than their normal reporting location, ~~and for Police Officers on duty,~~ use of a City vehicle for travel within ~~one-five~~ miles of ~~the City limits said work location,~~ for the purpose of lunch and other authorized breaks shall not be considered personal use.
- d. Overnight use: It is the intent of this policy that all municipal vehicles will have returned to their designated work location by the end of the work shift unless prior written authorization has been received from the City Administrator.
- e.. Personal use: Personal use of City vehicles by City employees or elected officials is prohibited without the express written consent of the City Administrator or ~~his/her~~ the City Administrator's designee.

11.5 ***Telecommuting / Remote Work Policy***

Definition

Telecommuting is a work arrangement where ~~the employees~~ works from home or another remote work site away from the primary traditional work place.

Purpose Consideration

Consideration for telecommuting arrangements may be made on a case--by--case basis and only in situations where the employee can demonstrate a benefit to the City. Telecommuting is not appropriate for all employees, it is not a City wide benefit or entitlement, in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with the City and is not a substitute for dependent care.

Participation

Full-time and part-time employees, ~~except those under collective bargaining agreements,~~ may apply to participate. To be considered, employees must have successfully completed probation, received a satisfactory rating on their last performance evaluation and not had ~~any~~ disciplinary action taken against them during the past year. Seniority will not be a basis for selecting employees to participate in this program. The City Administrator and Department Head must agree to all telecommuting arrangements and the arrangement may be revoked at any time for any reason.

Part-time employees must have a regular schedule in which they would otherwise work five days per week in the office for at least 28 hours per week. If approved, part-time employees may not work more than one day per week remotely.

General Eligibility

- Eligible Employees: Employees working in the office at least 28 hours per week, five days per week as their primary role.
- Ineligible Employees: Employees working in the office less than 28 hours per week, or those working in the field as their primary role.
- All requests meeting the eligibility requirements of this policy will be considered based on individual circumstances; there shall be no guarantee of approval based on job class.

Application Process

The telecommuting application must be completed indicating how the telecommuting will benefit the City. All applications must be signed by the Department Head and then forwarded to Human Resources. The Department Head, Human Resources and the City Administrator will evaluate the application to determine whether or not the application will be approved or denied, at the sole discretion of the City Administrator. The Department Head will then meet with the employee regarding the determination. The Department Head is responsible for ensuring adequate coverage in the office.

Telecommuting Program

It is recommended that employees who telecommute do so for a maximum of two days per week, or on a short-term project basis. The telecommuter and the Department Head should agree upon a regular schedule of work hours and work location. Following the regular work schedule is necessary to ensure maximum accessibility. However, if needed, the employee must be willing and able to return to the primary work place at the request of the Department Head for any reason with minimal notice, but not greater than 48 hours' notice.

An employee's salary, benefits and job responsibilities will not be affected by participating in telecommuting. Overtime must have prior approval. A remote work site is considered a City work space and the employee, therefore, continues to be governed by applicable City policies, procedures, or practices.

~~The employee is to be available for telephone, computer and/or fax communication with the City at the times as agreed by the signers on the application. The employee will respond to telephone calls at the telecommuting work location, and will respond to telephone messages left for the employee at the employee's City work location.~~

The Department Head and telecommuter must establish an agreed upon schedule where the telecommuter contacts the office to report progress.

The telecommuting program and/or projects must have measurable objectives. For example, writing a section of a manual, working on a special project, processing regular business, or preparing spreadsheets and financial analysis where being out of the "office environment" could lead to its accomplishment in a ~~more timely~~timelier manner.

Telecommuters may be assigned a different workstation space at the office if it is determined that coverage is better suited by an office rearrangement as a result of the telecommuting agreement.

Employees must adhere to the following requirements and conditions

- Maintain in office days as full days as per employee's normal schedule; not split between in office and the remote location.
- Be available for virtual meetings with a webcam at the times, as well as impromptu meetings that may arise.
- Be available for telephone, email or other communication at all times
- Respond to telephone calls and messages from the telecommuting work location as if in the office.
- Promptly respond to phone messages and emails from the employee's supervisor or the supervisor's designee immediately or within fifteen minutes, unless the employee is on break.
- Connect computer to the City network for the entirety of the work day.
- Maintain updated Outlook calendars at all times.
- If unavoidable, any changes to an employees work schedule shall be communicated to the employee's direct supervisor and direct reports in a timely manner
- Agree to all costs such as internet access and 'ancillary equipment' such as printers, at the employee's cost.
- Telecommuters will take all precautions necessary to secure confidential and/or proprietary information and prevent unauthorized access into any City system.

Equipment

If an employee is approved for telecommuting and the project requires the use of a computer, the City shall provide the telecommuter a City-issued computer with Virtual Private Network (VPN) as well as soft phone software that allows the telecommuter to make and receive phone calls from their City assigned office phone number. The telecommuter must have access to any required technology to complete their task such as virtual meeting software and hardware, financial software, agenda software, etc. If the telecommuter desires a printer or other computer equipment, the cost of the equipment, maintenance repair of the equipment, equipment insurance, electricity, and/or phone lines are the employee's responsibility unless otherwise approved by the City Administrator. The cost of installing and licensing software will be at the City's expense as long as a software license already exists for that particular user.

~~In the case where an employee owns a personal computer, the employee must provide a copy of the appropriate documents to verify that the software being used is legally licensed and receive is utilizing virus detection, training from This will need to be verified for the IT Division. The City assumes no liability for loss, damage or wear of employee-owned equipment. Due to security concerns, the telecommuter shall not use a personal computer for purposes of telecommuting. The City assumes no liability for loss, damage or wear of employee-owned equipment. If the IT Division determines that the telecommuter is using a computer with software installed that is not properly licensed and/or does not receive virus protection, the telecommuting agreement may be terminated and disciplinary action may be followed as per the Personnel Policy and union contracts.~~

~~Telecommuters will take all precautions necessary to secure confidential and/or proprietary information and prevent unauthorized access into any City system.~~

City supplied Software/Hardware shall include the following: Computer (desktop or laptop), Virtual Private Network (VPN), Softphone or Cell Phone software to 'twin' with office phone and customary software on the desktop

Insurance

The employee will be covered by Worker's Compensation while working at the telecommuting work address during the hours of work as indicated on the Telecommuting Application. The city of Ramsey's liability is limited to injuries resulting directly from the work and only if the injury occurs in the designated work area. Any claims will be handled according to regular Workers Compensation procedures. If injured while telecommuting, the employee ~~should~~ shall follow the appropriate procedures for reporting the injury. Other family members or visitors to the telecommuting work address are not covered by the City's Worker's Compensation program. The city of Ramsey is not liable for any injuries to family members, visitors, or others in the employee's home. ~~Employees should consider carrying insurance to cover these instances.~~

Telecommuters working at home will have a designated space maintained by the employee. With advance notice, the employer may visit the work site to ensure that safe work conditions exist. For projects involving extensive computer use, staff may request a ergonomics evaluation of the work area: to be conducted virtually by one of the City's trained ergonomics assessors.

Expenses

The City will not reimburse the employee for any expenses the employee incurs to participate in telecommuting. This includes equipment, utilities, supplies and furniture. The City will provide a small and reasonable number of office supplies (such as pens, paper, post-it notes, and paper clips) for use by the telecommuter.

Travel time from the home to the workplace is not compensatory, even if the employee reports to the regular workplace on a day scheduled for telecommuting.