



Williamson County Policy

County Telework Policy

Sensitivity: Public
Criticality: Low
Primary Type: Policy

Summary

Purpose

If done correctly, teleworking has been found to increase productivity for both the employee and the organization. Teleworking can positively impact employee morale and organizational culture as well as reduce demands on County facilities. With the appropriate tools and guidance, telework can be nearly seamless for the department. This policy defines the standards, eligibility, and other rules and requirements for telework.

Scope

This policy applies to all County employees, County departments, and elected officials who are approved to telework in any capacity.

Definitions

Department

Unless specifically noted otherwise, the use of the word “department” or related forms of that word includes both Commissioners Court departments and all elected offices that utilize Williamson County infrastructure.

Telework

The performance of individual County work functions at approved locations outside of County worksites at the discretion of the department head/elected official.

Telework Schedule

The days and hours agreed upon by the department head/elected official and employee about when the employee may telework and when they must present for work at their County worksite.

Telework Site

The location away from the employee’s assigned County worksite where an employee has been authorized to telework. The telework site should be in the employee’s home unless the employee’s department head or elected official approves for the employee to work from an alternative telework site.

Roles and Responsibilities

A. Employees

1. All employees must adhere to this policy and any department-specific telework policies when teleworking.

2. Employees shall follow their department's call-in and leave request procedures. Personal leave time must be arranged in the same manner as employees working at the County worksite. Teleworkers who are unable to work due to illness or medical appointments must use sick leave or other paid leave and report their absence to their department in accordance with department policy.
3. Employees shall be available to attend in-person meetings or report to a County worksite when requested. Employees understand that they may be called to report to their County worksite on their regular telework schedule to meet department needs.
4. Employees shall keep personal interruptions such as telephone calls and visitors to a minimum.
5. Employees should adhere to the same standards of professionalism, personal appearance, workspace/background appearance, customer service, and other requirements as in-office personnel.
6. Employees shall read and attest to this policy and any applicable department policies regarding telework.

B. Departments

1. Departments shall request teleworking access for each user in order to account for software licensing as well as attestation to the policy by the user.
2. Departments that authorize telework are required to ensure each employee fully understands and complies with this policy.
3. Departments have the right to refuse to make telework available and to terminate an existing telework arrangement at any time.
4. Departments are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness and productivity of teleworking employees.
5. Departments may define specific requirements regarding employee comfort and safety in the telework site.
6. Customer service, professionalism, and the effectiveness of the office shall not be negatively affected by teleworking.
7. Any department that receives a request to telework as an ADA accommodation must complete the Reasonable Accommodation Request Form on the Human Resources SharePoint page.

Policy

C. General

1. Telework does not change compensation, benefits, vacation, or other paid leave.
2. Telework does not alter an employee's obligation to comply with duties and responsibilities and County and department policies.
3. Employees shall not conduct any non-County employment during their telework schedule.
4. Specific departments may have additional policies unique to their operations. Department policies must not conflict with or be less stringent than this policy.

D. Eligible Employees

1. The nature of the position's work functions and the employee's individual skill set and ability must allow for telework.
2. The eligibility of an individual position and/or employee is defined by the department head or elected official.
3. Performance and/or attendance issues shall affect an employee's eligibility to telework.

4. Violations of this policy shall affect an employee's eligibility to telework.

E. Remote Location Requirements

1. The telework site must have the appropriate setup for the employee to be effective, be safe, and maintain information security for the duration of their shift.
2. The telework site must allow for employee comfort and safety for the duration of the work shift. It is the responsibility of the employee to provide the space, furniture, network connectivity, and other items needed to create an appropriate telework setup.
3. Safety and injury prevention should be practiced in the telework site to avoid injury or incident.
4. Employees shall refer to the current Safety Checklist to ensure their telework site meets safety requirements.
5. The telework site must allow for adequate noise control and connectivity to ensure clear telephone and video conference calls and maintain professionalism and good customer service.
6. The telework site must allow for privacy to ensure that other individuals do not have access to confidential matters.
7. Certain software packages or processes may not perform as well from a remote location, and the employee and department may need to take this into account when authorizing telework.
8. If the employee cannot work effectively, safely, and securely from the telework site, telework should not be authorized.
9. Teleworking employees shall not hold in-person business meetings with internal or external clients, customers, or colleagues at their telework site.
10. Scheduled Telework must be performed within the State of Texas.

F. Technology Equipment & Support

1. Employees are responsible for providing an internet connection sufficient to communicate (audio and video) and perform the job from their telework site in a manner that is satisfactory to the department head. The County will not provide cellular internet devices (i.e. MiFi, hotspots) for this purpose.
2. Employees are responsible for providing, testing, and validating the network connection before scheduling telework with their supervisor.
3. Resolution of any issues with network connectivity will be the responsibility of the employee. If connectivity issues cannot be resolved in a timely manner or if intermittent issues persist, the employee will need to report to their assigned work site or utilize their leave accruals.
4. Employees must use County-owned computers or mobile devices to telework, except as otherwise authorized or required under this policy. This ensures compliance with County policies pertaining to hardware, security, and encryption.
5. Use of the County's Virtual Private Network (VPN) software is always required when accessing County data from a wireless or wired network not managed by Williamson County (e.g., home and public networks).
6. Using non-County devices (smartphones, iPads, etc.) for Office 365 applications is permitted, but devices must comply with the security requirements below.

7. Use of personal smartphones (or tablets) may be required to access the Multi-Factor Authentication system (see Security section).
8. The County will not provide additional technology equipment for the express purpose of teleworking. While assigned technology equipment may be used for teleworking at the department's discretion, duplicate setups of monitors, docks, computers, etc., or any equipment required for telework will not be provided or approved in the budget process or supported by Technology Services.
9. Technology Services will support users teleworking as much as possible but will not be able to support issues related to home/private internet issues or personal equipment (routers, firewalls, etc.), as well as networked devices on non-County networks (e.g., network printers).
10. Technology Services will provide remote assistance to teleworking employees via phone, email, and remote support. No onsite support for teleworking employees is possible, so any issues that cannot be solved remotely will need to be done at IT or at another County office.

G. Security

1. Utmost care must be taken to protect County data when teleworking. This includes physically placing computer screens away from windows, unauthorized persons, or cameras.
2. Computers, phones, and tablets must not be left unattended at any time while unlocked.
3. In public settings, extra precautions should be taken to ensure the privacy and security of County data.
4. There may also be regulations on the data, such as CJIS or HIPAA, that require additional security measures when working outside a secure location.
5. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring employees are compliant with all applicable regulations while teleworking.
6. Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) is required to access County data and/or networks from a telework site.
7. All teleworking employees must utilize the MFA application and notifications on a smartphone or tablet. Those employees issued a County-owned smartphone or tablet pursuant to other policies may use that device for this purpose. For all other employees, the use of a personally owned smartphone or tablet is required for the MFA application. A County-owned smartphone will not be issued to employees solely for this purpose.

H. Liability

1. Compensability for employee injuries or occupational diseases will be determined by Workers' Compensation as in any other off-site incident.
2. In the event of a job-related injury at the telework site, the injured employee must immediately report the incident to his/her supervisor.
3. The County is not liable for any third-party (family, visitors, etc.) injuries which may occur at a telework site.
4. Teleworkers must allow the County to inspect the telework site during normal working times for compliance with this policy and safety investigations. Inspections will be performed by Risk Management staff in conjunction with Human Resources, as needed.

I. Communication Requirements

1. All teleworking employees must be reachable throughout their shift according to the standards set by their supervisor or department.
2. Communication methods that are supported by Technology Services are email, Microsoft Teams, WebEx, Jabber, and County-issued smartphones.
3. Video chat/conferencing may be required depending on the position and nature of the work.

J. Performance Monitoring

1. Department heads and supervisors are responsible for determining the measurement of performance of teleworking employees as well as supervising staff while teleworking. The same standards of performance for in-office work shall apply to telework.
2. The criteria of performance will be clearly communicated to each employee before engaging in telework.
3. Employees may be asked to log into the County's timekeeping system or check in with a supervisor at the start and/or end of a teleworking shift through a similar (or equivalent) process as an in-office work shift.
4. Performance monitoring may include a review of computer logs, email and Teams messages, or other electronic means.
5. Failure to meet the performance criteria or policies shall result in loss of eligibility to telework.

K. Ad Hoc Arrangements

1. Temporary telework may be approved for circumstances such as inclement weather, special projects, facility issues, family and personal issues, or business travel. These arrangements are approved on an as-needed basis only, with no expectation of ongoing continuance.
2. Other short-term arrangements may be made for employees on family or medical leave to the extent practical for the employee and the organization with the consent of the employee's health care provider, if appropriate. Generally speaking, you may not telework as a substitute for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) without participating in the reasonable accommodations process with Human Resources.
3. All ad hoc telework arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the business needs of the department or office.

Exceptions

Requests for exceptions to this policy must be documented via the [Policy Exception Procedure](#) and approved by the management of Williamson County Human Resources or Technology Services (depending on the exception requested).

Violations

Violation of this policy may lead to disciplinary actions up to and including loss of remote access technologies or termination of employment.

Related Statutes, Policies, and Authorities

Safety Checklist published by Williamson County Risk Management (available on SharePoint)

Policy Exception Procedure published by Williamson County Technology Services (linked on SharePoint)

Department Policies: Please refer to any department-specific policies your office may have that may reference this document.

Contact Office

Human Resources: Contact your designated HR Generalist or 512-943-1533 (x31533)

Technology Services: servicedesk@wilco.org or 512-943-1456 (x31456)

Risk Management: riskmanagement@wilco.org or 512-943-1980 (x31980)

Administrative Notes

Policy Class: Resource Management

Policy Family: Human Resource Management

Policy: Williamson County Telework Policy

Revision History

Version	Date	Description
3.0		Addition of Risk Management/Legal/HR Items
2.0	10/18/2022	Adoption by Commissioner's Court and Republication
1.2	9/22/2022	Point of Clarification: MFA Required for all remote access (Sections C.7, D.5, and D.6 of this document.) Section format change (re-designated Letter/Number in listings) Added Violations section for uniformity with other modern policies Added Exceptions section for uniformity with other modern policies
1.1	7/27/2021	Clarified language and made for more broad use cases.
1.0	6/2/2020	First version – COVID-19 specific.