



Section:	Human Resources
Subject:	Hybrid Work Model Policy – One (1) Year Trial
Policy Number:	HR-03-21
Approval Date:	December 6, 2021 (Approved for One (1) Year Trial)
Approved By:	Council (R21-12-477)
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