

**YAKIMA COUNTY
REMOTE WORK POLICY
POLICY NO. HR 037**

Signed Copy Available at
Yakima County Human Resources
128 N. 2nd Street, Room B27
Yakima, WA 98901

I. Purpose

To align with the changes in today's business practices and to lessen the impact on the environment/ promote the Commute Trip Reduction Program required by all Washington State large employers, Yakima County will consider remote arrangements. These arrangements will be considered provided they do not have a negative impact upon services to the public nor impede the County office or department from accomplishing its mission in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

Each County office or department may develop additional remote work requirements, guidelines, or procedures, provided they are consistent with the intent of this policy.

Provisions of negotiated labor contracts which conflict with this policy take precedence over this policy to the extent applicable.

Remote work is not an entitlement, benefit, or right. Approval is discretionary and based on operation needs.

II. Eligibility and Parameters

a. Employee Eligibility

The decision to allow remote work is based on the employee's ability to complete assigned tasks and duties. Employees eligible to work remotely must also have the following qualifications:

1. be in good standing (employees must not be on notice or under any disciplinary action); and
2. have a demonstrated ability in communicating electronically.
3. have demonstrated the ability to be productive in a remote work environment and perform the essential duties of the job while working remotely.

b. Position Eligibility

The Department Head / Elected Official is responsible for designating positions and employees eligible for remote work and ensuring that department policy provides for fair and equitable treatment of employees regardless of remote work status. There are many Yakima County positions that because of the nature of the work performed, remote work is not feasible.

The Department Head / Elected Official will consider the following steps before implementing a remote work program:

1. Set Clear Expectations
 - Formulate and communicate a comprehensive department specific remote work policy and procedure for employees.
 - Set core work hours – the standard hours during which an employee is expected to be working in accordance with their FTE. These may vary from employee to employee.
 - The employee is expected to perform the work and be accessible during the agreed upon core hours unless there is prior approval from the supervisor.

2. Monitor, Evaluate and Communicate:

- Develop fair performance evaluation criteria before implementing remote work schedule.
- Develop clear and consistent expectations for how to measure performance.
- Develop a plan with periodic monitoring to ensure the work is completed properly; and
- Communicate with employees to determine what, if any, tasks must be completed onsite and how often the employee is expected to meet in person.

c. Length of Assignment

Remote work is strictly within the discretion of the Department Head/ Elected Official and may be revoked at any time.

Remote work agreements should be renewed every calendar year.

d. Compensation

1. Employee salary / hourly rate of pay, benefits, worker compensation, paid leave plans and other employee benefits shall not change due to remote work status.
2. Non-exempt / hourly employees may not perform any work outside the established work schedule without prior approval from the supervisor.
3. Employees will not be monetarily compensated for the use of electricity, internet, telephone costs incurred while the employee is working remotely from home.

III. Responsibilities

a. Human Resources Department

Will retain all employee remote work agreements using Workday as the system of record.

b. Department Head/ Elected Official

1. Will assess the request for remote work for feasibility and if the work meets the business needs and expectations of the Department.
2. It is the responsibility of the Department Head / Elected Official to monitor initiation, modification and expiration of these agreements.
3. Has the right to terminate remote work agreements at any time and are required to perform a periodic evaluation of the work arrangement while in force.

c. Employee

1. Must adhere to the guidelines, policies and procedures as designated by Yakima County, the Department Head / Elected Official and of the work standards required by state and federal employment regulations.
2. Is encouraged to discuss expectations of remote work with household members prior to entering into a remote work agreement.

3. Must have appropriate dependent care or caregiving arrangements. Employees should not be actively engaging in dependent care or caregiving activities during periods they count toward time worked.
4. If dependent care or caregiving activities prevent / significantly disrupt work, the employee should notify the supervisor to request an appropriate adjustment to their schedule or allow for use of paid or unpaid leave.
5. When employees' children are sick, sick leave or another type of paid leave should be taken instead of working remotely. This is for the comfort of both the employee and their child or children and the safety of the child or children. If working is unavoidable because of a deadline and the employee wants to work, employees can seek permission from the Elected Official or Department Head to work remotely part of the day. However, this exception should be used sparingly as employees' attention should remain on their child or children when illness occurs.
6. Must notify their supervisor when circumstances prevent effective remote work. Examples include illness, power / equipment failures, loss of connectivity. Supervisors may direct the employees to report to their regular worksite or other County worksite.
7. Sick leave or other forms of paid leave should be used when employees are ill instead of working remotely as it is important for employees' health that they are able to rest and recuperate. At Yakima County, our employees' health and welfare remain top priorities. In the case of a minor illness, employees may ask for permission from the Elected Official/Department Head to work remotely part of the day.

IV. Procedures

a. Safe Work Environment

1. The Department Head / Elected Official has the discretion to inspect and approve an employee's home as an alternate work location for remote work. The initial inspection will be scheduled and completed prior to the approval for Remote Work. Only the areas in the home the employee designates as work space will be inspected. The work location must be maintained in clean, professional, and safe conditions. The scheduling and results of all inspections shall be kept in a written/electronic record by the Human Resources Department. Inspections shall be conducted by the Employee's Manager, HR Risk Analyst (or representative) and the remote worker. Subsequent inspections shall occur once each year. Initial inspections must be in person. Subsequent inspections may be done virtually. HR will schedule subsequent inspections.
 - i. If the remote worker moves or remodels their home, a new in person inspection would be required.
2. The employee's home workplace is considered an extension of the normal County work location. The employee will be covered by workers' compensation laws and regulations if accidents occur while performing work on behalf of the County and during the understood and approved work schedule at the alternate work location. Workers' compensation shall not apply to non-job-related injuries that occur in the alternate work location.

3. The Employee is responsible for all expenses needed to establish and maintain an appropriate work environment including furniture, lighting, and connectivity.
4. Employees shall not have in-person work related meetings with external or internal customers at their alternate work location.
5. Should the workers' remote work site and/or network connectivity not pass inspection or fail, the remote work authorization may be revoked.

b. Technology Requirements

1. The Technology Services Department reserves the right to determine, with information supplied by the employee and supervisor, the appropriate equipment needs for each remote work arrangement. Equipment should include camera capability.
2. Any hardware, software, equipment or office supplies provided by the County remains the property of the County and must be returned to the County when the remote work agreement is terminated, including employee separation.
3. Employees are responsible for taking care of the equipment to protect it from damage or theft. In the event of either, the employee is to immediately report the event to their supervisor.

c. Work Productivity Expectations

Prospective remote workers should work with their supervisor to determine the most effective ways to communicate.

1. Reporting To Work

- i. Each remote work arrangement will include hours of work within an established work week. Remote work involves a cooperative, good-faith agreement that the employee working remotely will maintain the assigned schedule and perform productive work during the designated business hours or confirmed schedule. The remote work employee agrees to minimize engaging in personal business or activities beyond the extent considered reasonable at a County worksite.
- ii. Employees must report to work at the standard work location (normal County work setting i.e. office) if an emergent issue arises.

2. Productivity Standards While Working

- i. Employees are expected to maintain high-quality productivity, performance, communication and responsive standards to meet deadlines.
- ii. All employees will be held to the same performance standards regardless of work location.
- iii. Employees working remotely will be promptly responsive to phone calls, e-mails, tickets and will always be active on the standard video conferencing application (i.e. Teams, Zoom).

3. Communication with Others

- i. Remote work employees must maintain the same level of coordination, communication and connectivity with their coworkers, customers, and partners as would be expected in a centralized office environment.
- ii. Employees shall maintain a professional virtual presence during remote work hours and comply with the dress code expectations outlined in the Yakima County Employee Handbook during virtual meetings.
- iii. Communication between a remote work employee and their supervisor will be in a manner and frequency appropriate for the position and individuals involved.
- iv. Remote workers are expected to reflect their remote work schedule on their outlook calendar.

d. Record Retention

All files, records, papers, or other materials created while working remotely become County property and must be retained (either in hard copy or electronically) consistent with the Washington State Archives record retention rules and/or county policy. All electronic documents must be saved to the County network and not maintained on employees' personal storage devices. Each department will determine the appropriate storage method and location for documents not electronically saved. Confidential records should not be removed from the County work site to work on remotely. Employees will need to work with their supervisors about which work tasks can be performed remotely and which tasks necessitate more structure.

e. Remote Work and Inclement Weather

1. If the County offices are closed for work activities or have a delayed opening, remote workers whose home office is not impacted by the inclement weather should continue to work as usual.
2. If the remote worker's office closure impacts the employee's ability to perform work (i.e., does not have access to materials or resources needed), the employee should contact their supervisor immediately. If the employee and the supervisor agree that the employee is unable to work remotely, the supervisor may direct the remote worker to come into the office to finish their workday. Other alternatives include utilization of employees' paid leave to cover the remainder of the day or, if the remote worker is on a flexible work schedule, making arrangements to make up the lost time later in the same week.



REMOTE WORK AGREEMENT

Yakima County supports remote work arrangements and allows departments to implement such arrangements for employees meeting eligibility criteria. This agreement is intended to ensure both the supervisor and the employee have a clear, shared understanding of the terms and conditions of the employee's remote work arrangement.

Employee Name:		Employee ID:	Job Title / Classification:
Department:		Supervisor:	
Primary Remote Work Site Address:			
Remote work arrangement effective dates			
Start Date:			
End Date:			
Indefinite:			
Initial Review Date:			
1st Quarter Review Date:			
2nd Quarter Review Date:			
3rd Quarter Review Date:			
4th Quarter Review Date:			

Scheduled Work Hours			
Day:	Remote Work Day?	Start Time:	End Time:
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

Expectations for a remote work employee:

- To reflect remote work schedules on their calendars, be available, responsive and productive during scheduled work hours.

- Duties, obligations, and responsibilities are the same as what would be performed at the central worksite, including the obligation to respond to voicemail, e-mail and other messages in a timely manner.
- Work will be performed at the above-listed location(s) during the designated remote work schedule, unless the employee has received prior approval to temporarily work elsewhere.
- The employee will observe required rest and meal periods consistent with employment status and County policy.
- Any time off or overtime must be prearranged, preapproved and recorded according to applicable policies, department guidelines, union contract terms, etc.

Productivity/Performance Expectations:

Each remote work employee is required to maintain the same level of productivity and performance (quality, quantity, timeliness) as they would at the central work site. *List below the cadence for how work progress is communicated, and productivity/performance will be managed and assessed (e.g. structured daily or weekly check-ins, work status reports, dashboards, action plans).*

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Work Product Security/Retention

Each remote work employee agrees to ensure the protection and safeguarding of any confidential information and documents (in both physical and digital format) accessible within their remote work site, including preventing unauthorized access to any County system or information, and disposal of work-related documents in an appropriate manner. *List below any specific security or record retention requirements, and the required safeguarding method(s).*

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Technology Support & Requirements/ Equipment & Supplies

- Remote work employees are required to provide and maintain reliable internet connectivity and speed to support their work demands and position for the duration of the remote work arrangement. In the event of equipment failure or service interruption, the employee must notify their supervisor immediately to discuss alternate assignments or other options.
- Equipment/technology provided or paid for by the County will be maintained by the County at the central worksite and must be used for business purposes only. Remote work employees are subject to the same County policies regarding the use of county provided equipment as that of employees at the centrally located worksite. All County property will be returned to the county when the remote work arrangement is no longer valid, if the equipment is no longer needed to do

their work, if employment with the county is terminated, or as requested unless other arrangements have been made.

- Additionally, each remote work employee is required to maintain a remote work site that is safe, functional, ergonomically suitable and free from recognized hazards. The employee is responsible for costs associated with the setup and ongoing maintenance of the remote workspace (remodeling, furniture or lighting, repairs or modifications to the workspace). The County will, however, supply remote work employees with appropriate office supplies and computer equipment as needed for their position and the work performed.

Technology / Equipment & Supplies provided to the employee:			
Equipment Item	Provided by:	Date Provided:	Notes
Laptop / Desk Top			
Docking Station			
Mouse			
Keyboard			
Monitor			
Webcam /Speakers			
Headset/ Microphone			
Printer			
Other:			
Other:			

Acknowledgments:	Employee Initials
I understand this Remote Work Agreement may be discontinued at any time by Yakima County, at the sole discretion of the Elected Official/Department Head.	
I have read and understand the Yakima County Remote Work Policy (and the departmental remote work policy, if applicable), the Remote Work technical requirements and agree to all provisions, including those further detailed in this Agreement.	
I understand I am required to comply with all timekeeping and overtime requirements and regulations defined by local, state or federal law (e.g., the Fair Labor Standards Act), applicable collective bargaining agreement, and/or Yakima County policy.	
I have discussed expectations of remote work with my household members prior to entering into this remote work agreement.	
I understand the work I perform while working remotely remains subject to Yakima County records retention policy and applicable regulations, including the Washington State Public Records Act RCW 42.56	

I understand work-related injuries at my remote work location during working hours may be covered by Workers' Compensation. I agree to report any work-related illness or injury in accordance with Section 1.7 (Accident/Incident Reporting) of the Accident Prevention Program. I will allow the County to conduct remote work site inspections if there are safety and ergonomic concerns, or if a job-related incident or accident has occurred.	
I agree to maintain the confidentiality of all Yakima County information and documents and prevent unauthorized access to any County system or information.	
I agree to comply with all County policies and consistently demonstrate County organizational values in meeting the performance and behavioral standards of my position.	
I agree to report to the central worksite as necessary, when requested/directed to do so by my supervisor.	
Acknowledgments (continued):	Employee Initials
I understand any use of my personal vehicle for work travel during the course of my scheduled workday is subject to compliance with all conditions listed in the Yakima County Business Expense Policy.	
Other:	

This remote work agreement is not a contract of employment and does not provide any contractual rights to continued employment.

Employee Signature:	Date:
Supervisor Signature:	Date:
Department Head /Elected Official:	Date: