**MOBILE WORK PROGRAM**

**PURPOSE**

The District recognizes that in this increasingly complex world, the high caliber staff the agency wishes to attract and retain may need to use innovative approaches to accomplish their work. The District wishes to support our workforce by providing the tools and resources to maximize productivity and performance, regardless of the work location.

Innovative approaches include telework, flexible work schedules, and other workplace strategies, such as hoteling, and remote or mobile work. Supporting a mobile workforce is a workplace strategy that can help foster an engaging work environment, support health and wellness, ensure continuity of operations, optimize facilities costs, and reduce our environmental footprint, air pollution and traffic congestion.

This policy establishes a mobile work program and applies to all District employees. District employees may be allowed to occasionally work in alternate locations that do not meet the below definition of telework. These situations, commonly referred to as mobile work, do not require documentation that a formal telework arrangement requires. As with telework arrangements, however, mobile workers and their supervisors are responsible for ensuring that all issues related to mobile work are managed (see principles below) when working in alternate work locations.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Mobile Work** is work that is completed in an environment other than the official worksite. This can include working from a home office and/or working from other locations, for example, a hotel, coffee shop, job site, partner agency site, or in travel status. Some modes of mobile work need to be documented (e.g., telework). Mobile work includes formal telework arrangements, but also includes employees whose work either requires or allows them to perform work tasks from various locations.

**Telework** is the practice of working from home or other alternative locations closer to home using technology which allows the employee to access normal work material (email, telephone, remote access, electronic documents, etc.). Telework may be scheduled or done on an ad hoc basis. Teleworking arrangements of a regular basis of 2 or more days per month requires a signed Telecommuting Agreement.

**Official Worksite** is the principal place of employment designated by the agency as the location where the employee’s work is performed.

**Telework Worksite** is the employee's home office or another office apart from the employee's official worksite.

**Workplace Strategy** is the dynamic alignment of an organization’s work patterns with the work environment to enable peak performance and optimize costs.

**MOBILE WORK PRINCIPLES**

In accordance with Executive Order 14.02 and RCW 70.94.521-551 (Commute Trip Reduction Act), the District will actively support mobile working, including teleworking employees.

Mobile work must maintain or enhance productivity and client services.

Mobile work is not an employee entitlement or right.

Mobile work is a cooperative understanding between the supervisor and employee. As such, both the supervisor and the mobile worker are responsible for ensuring all issues related to mobile work are managed. These include, but are not limited to:

* team dynamics
* customer service
* availability to clients and coworkers
* safeguarding of private, sensitive, confidential information and public records
* performance and accountability
* public perception

Employee salaries, benefits, worker’s compensation, and other employee insurance coverage do not change for an employee who conducts mobile work. No additional compensation, travel or other benefits will be provided.

Mobile work may be used as a recruitment and/or retention strategy when a desirable candidate or incumbent lives or moves outside a reasonable commuting distance to the District office.

Mobile work requests from employees in temporary, probationary, trial service or in-training appointments will be reviewed for the potential impact on the employee's learning and development. Generally, employees in those types of appointments are successful when they are in a learning environment where close supervision is available, and resources are easily accessible.

Mobile work is not a substitute for child/elder care. Mobile workers must manage those responsibilities in a way that does not disrupt the operations of the District, including the possibility of having to report to their official work location unexpectedly.

Mobile workers must not conduct in-person meetings at home office worksites. In-person meetings with customers, clients, members of the public, or coworkers must be conducted at appropriate, customary business locations.

Employees are liable for injuries to third parties and/or members of the employee's family when working from a home office worksite.

Mobile workers must maintain a regular work schedule, both while mobile working and when working at their official work location.

Regular teleworking arrangements must be formally documented between the supervisor and employee and must begin with a trial period, after which the supervisor and employee will evaluate the telework arrangement to determine if the arrangement is meeting performance and client satisfaction expectations and should continue.

Whether documented or not, all mobile work arrangements should be reviewed regularly (at a minimum quarterly) by the supervisor and employee to ensure these principles are met.

Mobile work arrangements are not generally intended for employees who do not reside in Washington State. Out-of-state mobile work arrangements may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Because such arrangements carry tax implications, labor/employment law issues and public perception issues, consultation with the Director of Finance & Administration and other approving authorities is required before any arrangement is agreed to.

All employees wishing to mobile work will have demonstrated an ability to work independently in a productive manner.

Office space made available due to mobile work will be shared whenever possible to optimize facility costs.

**POLICY**

**Consideration of Mobile Work**

Determining an employee’s eligibility to mobile work requires an assessment of the employee’s work history, the employee’s knowledge of his or her assigned duties, and the employee’s ability to successfully perform under limited supervision. Supervisors considering mobile work requests/arrangements must consider any prior performance counseling, discipline or violation of employee conduct policy. Positions requiring on-site performance of duties (e.g., reception or volunteer and client interaction) or positions requiring the handling of classified, sensitive materials (e.g., public records coordination) may not be candidates for mobile work. Additionally, employees new to the organization or their position or who are under a performance improvement plan may not be eligible for mobile work.

**Working Conditions**

1. Mobile workers are responsible for ensuring the work environment is safe and free from hazards, regardless of the mobile work location.
2. A home office should meet the same health and safety standards as those in the official worksite, including ergonomic considerations. Mobile workers should consult with agency ergonomic experts to ensure their home office space is a suitable worksite. However, this will not be done at the expense of the District.
3. Whether at the mobile worker's home or in another facility, the mobile work worksites are subject to District and/or Labor and Industries (L&I) inspection to ensure safe working conditions and protection of state resources.
4. To ensure overtime eligible employees are compensated in accordance with laws, regulations and the District’s Overtime, Exchange Time and Compensation Policy, supervisors who approve mobile work for overtime eligible employees shall ensure the mobile worker is compensated for all work performed, including time spent on incidental activities, such as reading and sending emails and/or checking voice messages.
5. Unless other arrangements are made, mobile workers will attend District meetings and all assigned office meetings.
6. A teleworker is responsible for travel costs between the official worksite and their telework worksite.
7. Mobile workers shall comply with all applicable laws, rules and policies associated with employment at Pierce Conservation District, as well as comply with any applicable telework arrangement provisions.
8. Mobile workers shall manage dependent care and personal responsibilities in a manner that does not interfere with job responsibilities. A plan should be in place to manage potential interruptions. Flex time or leave may need to be used if productivity levels are impacted by interruptions.
9. Agency expenditures not specifically covered by a mobile work arrangement must be pre-approved by the employee's supervisor and approving authority.

**Equipment**

1. Employees may, with supervisor approval, use their personal equipment (i.e., personal computer, fax machines, copier, phone, etc.) at a mobile worksite. Maintenance of personal equipment shall remain the responsibility of the employee. If an employee uses his or her personal equipment to perform work, the work on the personal equipment is subject to public disclosure or litigation discovery requests. To comply with public disclosure and discovery laws, the employee may be required to surrender his or her personal equipment (e.g., personal computer or cell phone) for a records search.
2. Mobile work arrangements will not typically result in the duplication of office equipment. If a home office requires other state-owned equipment, the supervisor and employee will consult with the appropriate personnel at Pierce Conservation District to determine options and costs and will provide detailed justification for approval by the Executive Director. Such equipment remains the property of Pierce Conservation District.
3. The District will not pay for additional telephone lines or purchase or reimburse employees for the cost of an internet service provider or internet use. If the District’s remote access system includes internet access or other dial-in services, the employee may only use the District provided internet access or other dial-in services in a manner consistent (reliable internet connection) with that of employees at the District office.
4. Mobile workers shall take precautions to ensure the safety and protection of state equipment, data and information. This includes using a surge protector with any District-owned equipment, using effective passwords and other security measures, not leaving equipment in plain view in their car, etc.
5. Mobile workers shall ensure that records and information are maintained in a secure and confidential manner that allows for proper retention, as well as preservation related to any litigation.
6. Mobile workers shall take precautions necessary to secure proprietary and confidential information and prevent unauthorized access to any District systems or paper files.

**Unforeseen Circumstances**

At times, due to severe weather, public health emergencies, facility interruptions or other cases, the District may highly encourage or make mandatory the use of telework. During those times, these same expectations are still the policy of the organization, minus the need for prior approval. Exceptions to the policy for equipment or other requirements may be made by the Executive Director on a case-by-case basis.

**Criteria, Approval and Documenting a Telework Arrangement**

Teleworking requests will be considered for an employee in relation to this policy, on a case-by-case basis, if the following minimum criteria are met:

1. The employee and supervisor have read and understand the provisions of this policy.
2. Job duties and responsibilities can be completed at the telework worksite.
3. Specific duties and verifiable outcomes for the work performed at the alternative worksite are identified on the employee’s calendar and agreed to by the employee and supervisor.
4. The employee is expected to be responsive to phone calls, email, and other forms of communication in a timely manner during normal working hours.
5. The employee's absence from the official worksite will not be detrimental to his or her work group's productivity, the needs of clients, partners or volunteers, or working conditions of other employees.
6. The employee has a demonstrated ability to work independently and without close supervision.
7. A plan is in place to monitor the telework arrangement to measure productivity, costs, and/or District benefit (see below under “Reviewing and Reporting”).
8. Initial agreements are approved on a trial basis. A trial period provides the supervisor and employee the opportunity to test how the telework agreement is working, make necessary adjustments, and determine whether to continue the arrangement.
9. Approved telework arrangements will be documented in the form of an email or other suitable manner, in writing.

**Reviewing and Reporting**

The employee and supervisor shall review mobile work arrangements on a regular basis (e.g. quarterly). Supervisors and employees with formal telework arrangements will be required to periodically provide information regarding telework arrangements to the Sr. Director of Finance & Administration to ensure that the minimum criteria are being met and the experience is beneficial to both the employee and the District.

**Termination of Mobile Work**

The supervisor or employee may terminate mobile work arrangements with reasonable notice (7 to 14 calendar days). Mobile work arrangements can be terminated at any time with the concurrence of the parties.