

Policy No. HR 409

Telecommuting

Applies to: All employees of EWSHS

References that apply to this policy: Listed below are some, but not all, applicable governing requirements. Note: Laws and rules may change over time and such changes may take precedence over this policy.

- RCW 70A.15.4090(transportation demand management)
- RCW 42.52.160: Use of persons, money, or property for private gain
- Chapter 42.56 RCW: Public Records Act
- WA Executive Order 16-07, Building a Modern Work Environment

Effective date: May 13, 2026

History: This policy updates HR 409, dated March 4, 2020, which updated and replaced BP #134.

Approved by: EWSHS Board of Trustees

Purpose

This policy describes the principles and standards for evaluating employee requests to telecommute and expectations of telecommuting employees.

Definitions

Telecommuting – A formal worksite alternative that is mutually agreed upon by an employee and their supervisor, subject to approval by the Executive Director.

Teleworker – An employee who has received formal approval to telecommute.

Alternate Worksite – May be an employee’s home or a satellite office closer to the employee’s home.

Official Workstation –Where the employee’s worksite is located, 2316 West First Avenue, Spokane, WA 99201.

Policy Statement

Telecommuting is neither a right nor should it be an expectation of employees. Telecommuting is available only when it improves efficiency, or it serves the mission of the agency as determined pursuant to the evaluation criteria below.

Occasionally working off-site for a few hours or a day does not constitute “telecommuting” as defined in this policy. These informal arrangements are permitted but must be negotiated between an employee and supervisor and must be for the purpose of meeting a specific business need.

Teleworkers may be authorized to work at an alternate location on a limited basis as requested and approved by a member of the Leadership Team. In exceptional circumstances, or for employees exempt from RCW 41.06, as set out in RCW 41.06.070, the Executive Director may authorize additional days. Employees must complete and submit the Mobile and Flexible Work Agreement form to their supervisor in order to request approval. Telecommuting arrangements will be reviewed and are subject to mutual agreement between the employee and their supervisor, subject to the approval of the Executive Director. The teleworker, supervisor, or Executive Director may terminate the telecommuting arrangement at any time, for any reason, with one day’s notice.

Evaluation Criteria for Applications to Telecommute

An effective telecommuting arrangement is one that benefits both the employee and EWSHS and will depend on a number of factors including, but not limited to, the duties assigned to an employee, performance of the employee, and the nature of work performed by EWSHS.

When considering a telecommuting application, employees and supervisors shall consider the following:

- Whether the employee’s duties require regular in-person interaction with co-workers, patrons, or the general public.
 - If the absence from the worksite would be detrimental to the productivity of the work group or information sharing.
 - Whether the employee has demonstrated an ability to consistently work independently and productively.
 - If the employee demonstrates sustained good performance.
 - Whether telecommuting requires specialized material or equipment.
 - The distance of an alternative worksite from the employee’s official workstation.
 - Whether telecommuting will be beneficial to the employee and not reduce EWSHS’ organizational efficiency.
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Requirements for Telecommuters and Telecommuting Arrangements

- Telecommuting is not an employee right and an employee's participation in the telecommuting program is entirely voluntary on the part of the employee and EWSHS.
- A current position description and performance and development plan should be in place to apply for and receive approval for telecommuting.

- Telecommuting arrangements will encompass a full workday that coincides with a teleworker's regularly assigned work hours, e.g., 8am to 5pm. A change in work schedule requires pre-approval of the supervisor. A teleworker is covered by the same provisions as a non-telecommuting employee regarding work hours, overtime compensation, the use of vacation, sick, and other leave, and they must comply with normal office reporting procedures. The employee may request, and the supervisor may approve either temporary or permanent changes to the teleworker's work hours on telecommuting days. Supervisors will document permanent work hour changes in the telecommuting agreement. See HR-407, Flexible Work Schedule, for any applicable terms.
- During work hours, the teleworker shall not be responsible for childcare, dependent adult care or other duties outside of their assigned job responsibilities. Additionally, during work hours the teleworker shall not engage in outside activities including, but not limited to, work related to other employment, including self-employment, conducting a personal business or participating in community organizations or club activities.
- Employees that telecommute will work standard hours as defined in HR 407.
- Employees authorized to telecommute will use their EWSHS issued devices. Anything additional used by an employee while telecommuting from home will be provided and paid for by the employee. The employee is also responsible for telephone, data lines, utility expenses, installation, monthly charges or costs incurred by the telecommuting employee in connection with approved telecommuting plan.
- The employee's supervisor may determine that certain equipment is essential for the employee to perform the job satisfactorily while telecommuting. The supervisor will provide justification for requiring such equipment. The Executive Director will approve or disapprove the cost of the essential equipment. Equipment and supplies furnished to the teleworker by the agency remains the property of the agency and is to be used only by authorized persons for official state business as specified in RCW 42.52.160.
- The teleworker's workspace is considered an extension of the primary worksite. Worker's compensation liability will be limited to standard work hours and the workspace, as defined as the space where the work takes place (i.e. a room in one's home that serves as an office), as opposed to applying to all areas of the alternate location. The workspace and work hours will be identified in the telecommuting agreement. The employee is responsible for ensuring that the workspace is reasonably hazard free. If the supervisor determines it is appropriate to verify that the workspace is adequate, the supervisor may choose to make on-site inspections at the alternate worksite. The teleworker must follow office procedures for reporting work-related injuries.
- Teleworkers are responsible for the security of information, documents, and records in their possession or used during telecommuting. Teleworkers shall maintain public records in compliance with the public records act.
- The teleworker may be expected to return to work at their official workstation when requested or necessary. If the supervisor makes such a request, the teleworker shall comply and should not expect to telecommute on an alternate day that week.

- Telecommuting agreements expire June 30 of each year, or as otherwise determined by the employee’s supervisor or the Executive Director. Employees seeking to continue telecommuting must reapply at least two weeks prior to expiration. The renewal of a telecommuting arrangement through a reapplication will be subject to the same review as the initial application and will utilize the criteria set forth in this policy.
- Teleworkers must be available to their supervisor, co-workers, and other necessary business contacts by email and telephone when telecommuting. The teleworker’s accessibility by telephone and email should be the same as when working at the official workstation.
- Teleworkers must post their telecommuting days and hours on their Teams status message and shared calendar.
- The teleworker must stay current on agency events, information, and business documents by regularly using email and remote access to agency databases during the telecommuting day as they would if working at the official workstation.
- If an office closure or emergency excuses other employees from working and work can proceed at alternate worksites, teleworkers must continue working.
- If an emergency, such as a power failure, affects the alternate worksite but not the official workstation, the teleworker must report to their official workstation, unless excused by their supervisor.
- The teleworker must notify their supervisor of any emergency as soon as possible. The supervisor may excuse the teleworker from required attendance at the official workstation, if appropriate.

Primary roles and responsibilities for telecommuting within EWSHS

Role	Responsibilities
Employee	Prepare the Mobile and Flexible Work Agreement form and forward it to the immediate supervisor.
Supervisor	<p>Approve or disapprove the Mobile and Flexible Work Agreement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If disapproved, discuss with the employee • If approved, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Complete and sign the Mobile and Flexible Work Agreement form and have the employee sign it. ○ Forward it to the Executive Director <p>Send fully executed copies of the form to the telecommuter and the agency’s Information Services. Send the original to the People & Culture Manager.</p>
Executive Director	Approve or disapprove the Mobile and Flexible Work Agreement. This includes authorization of costs for telecommuting.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If disapproved, return the form to the supervisor with an explanation • If approved, sign the form and return it to the supervisor
People & Culture Manager	File the original Mobile and Flexible Work Agreement form in the employee's personnel file.
IT Systems Administrator	Assess data communication needs of the telecommuter and inform the supervisor of the cost and time frame for installation. Process orders for hardware and software as needed.