

## AP 403 – Remote Work

### Purpose

Remote work is an arrangement in which some, or all, work is performed at a remote site for all or part of an employee's work week while still fulfilling all requirements of the position. Remote work may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not for others. Access to remote work is entirely voluntary, not an entitlement and will be arranged on a case by case basis. This policy outlines the parameters for employees working remotely.

### Guidelines

Remote work is defined as engaging in recurring, scheduled work performed from a remote location that is not an employee's regular worksite.

Remote work arrangements must be authorized and approved in advance by the Board. It is at the sole discretion of the Board to approve a request for remote work. Any remote work arrangement made will be on a trial basis for the first three (3) *months* but may be discontinued by the Board at any time. Every effort will be made to provide advance notice of such discontinuation although there may be instances when notice is not possible.

This policy does not alter or replace the existing terms and conditions of employment. Employees must still comply with all rules, policies, practices, and instructions that would apply if the employee were working at the Board's regular worksite.

### Approval Process

Individuals requesting formal remote work arrangements must be employed with the Board for a minimum of twelve (12) months of continuous, regular employment, and must have a satisfactory performance record, including time-management and organizational skills.

Before entering into any remote work agreement, the employee and supervisor/manager (or designate), with the assistance of the human resource department, will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement, taking into consideration relevant factors such as:

- whether the employee has work that can be completed outside the Board's regular worksite office;
- the operational needs of the employee's department or team;
- whether the employee had demonstrated an ability to work independently and with little oversight;
- or other relevant factors or circumstances.

The Board will ultimately determine the appropriateness and suitability of a remote working arrangement and will have sole discretion to approve such a request. If suitability is established by the Board, a Remote Work Agreement will be required and signed by the appropriate parties before such an arrangement can commence.

## **Time Worked**

The regular and consistent daily and weekly working hours of the position shall remain unchanged as a result of the remote work arrangement unless otherwise specified or varied in writing. An employee working remotely is expected to be available by telephone and email as if they were working at their regular workplace. Employees should ensure the supervisor/manager (or designate) is aware of any times when the employee may not be available while working remotely, and the supervisor / manager (or designate) has approved of such unavailability.

Employees working remotely are expected to be free from distractions or interruptions and ensure working remotely is in keeping with a work style of accessibility, communication and productivity during their regular hours. Employees working at a remote location must ensure they have appropriate dependent care arrangements in place in advance. Working at a remote location is not a substitute for child care or other personal obligations.

Work hours, compensation, and leave scheduling will continue to conform to applicable policies and agreements. Any changes in hours of work must be pre-authorized by the employee's supervisor / manager (or designate) in writing prior to implementing.

Employees working remotely are expected to be flexible in accommodating the needs and interests of the Board. Employees must still be available to report to the Board's regular worksite on remote work days, as and when required by the Board, to attend meetings, training, or other events. Advance notice will be provided by the Board where possible.

## **Expenses**

The Board will reimburse an employee for necessary and pre-authorized work-related expenses related to remote work.

Household expenses, such as internet and personal cell phones will not be reimbursed.

Should employees be required to attend work at the Board's regular worksite for any reason on a day scheduled for remote work, the Board will not be responsible for any mileage or transportation expenses.

The Board will follow CRA guidelines with respect to the declarations of conditions of employment for remote work.

## **Performance**

A remote work arrangement should not impede an employee's ability to complete regular work functions and duties, including communicating with colleagues, supervisors, subordinates and other contacts. Employees must stay current in terms of relevant department and work events. Employees must keep their direct supervisor/manager (or designate) regularly informed on the progress of work in the manner requested by that supervisor/manager (or designate) and secure support, advice and direction as needed. Evaluation of remote work performance will be consistent with that received by employees working at the Board's regular worksite.

Employees working remotely must continue to record their remote work hours based upon the Board's policies and procedures.

Supervisors / managers (or designates) must review the continued validity of remote working agreements for their staff at least semi-annually. This process ensures supervisors/managers (or designates) have the opportunity to evaluate and adjust remote work arrangements to meet operational needs.

## **Equipment**

The Board will determine the appropriate equipment needs, software and programs to be used while working remotely in order to maintain data security and confidentiality.

Equipment supplied by the organization will be maintained by the organization, and is subject to all applicable rules, policies and practices relating to use of equipment. Employees must take reasonable steps to protect any company property from theft, damage, or misuse. Any equipment supplied by the employee, if deemed appropriate by the Board IT guidelines will be maintained by the employee. The Board assumes no responsibility for any damage to, wear of, repairs or loss of an employee's personal property. The Board reserves the right to make determinations as to appropriate equipment, subject to change at any time.

The Board will supply the employee with appropriate office supplies (pens, paper, etc.) as deemed necessary.

The employee will establish an appropriate, professional workspace free from distractions, and interruptions. Workspace should be ergonomically optimized with proper furnishings and adequate space that supports working efficiently and safely. The Board will not be responsible for costs associated with the setup of the employee's remote workspace, such as remodeling, furniture or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to the space.

## Security

Consistent with the Board's security policies and expectations of information security, remote work employees will take all reasonable steps to ensure the protection of proprietary organization information accessible from their remote location. This will include at a minimum:

- Employees working remotely will be provided with secure access to the organization's system. Given the security risks associated with remote access, it is of utmost importance that remote working employees comply with all data security policies and procedures.
- All Board property, including documents, equipment, and devices must be kept secure to minimize or prevent loss or theft. Such property should not be left unattended when outside the remote workspace.
- All completed and working copies of documents must be saved on the Board's online system so that information is available to those who may require its use from the organization worksite. Personal email accounts should not be used to transfer or transmit organization information, and the Board's email accounts should be used to ensure all proprietary organization information continues to reside on secure servers.
- Telephone calls involving personal information, confidential organizational information, employment or other sensitive matters must be conducted in private and out of earshot of others.
- If using a home computer that is shared with others in the household, employees must ensure that they limit access to files containing personal, sensitive or confidential organizational information, and that all passwords are kept secure.
- Employees must seek approval from their supervisor/manager (or designate) prior to removing any physical files from the Board worksite. Physical files must be kept separate from other personal documents and should be kept private from other individuals.
- Remote work employees must exercise diligence in relation to their home security (i.e., locking doors and cabinets, activating alarms when away from home (if installed)).

Employees will continue to be bound by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act of British Columbia and any other applicable legislation.

## Health and Safety

The Board is responsible to provide safety guidelines and procedures and is committed to ensuring that remote work sites are safe. Employees are expected to maintain the remote workspace in a safe manner, free from safety hazards. The Board will provide each employee with a safety checklist that must be completed and reviewed with the supervisor/manager (or designate) when the remote work agreement is signed. At minimum, employees working remotely will utilize this safety checklist to assess their workspace for any hazards and dangers that could foreseeably affect themselves, and to

confirm their remote workspace is safe, healthy and ergonomically sound. The Board may make onsite visits to the employee's remote work site at a mutually agreed upon time to ensure that the workspace is safe and free from hazards. The Board may also request periodic safety or inspection reports from the employee. If the workspace is unsafe and cannot be made safe, the Board may cancel the remote work arrangement.

Employees working remotely must develop their own remote office work location protocols for evacuating from the workspace to a safe location if needed and how to contact the Board in case of emergency. Employees working remotely must follow safe practices, and report all work-related injuries, incidents or accidents to their manager within 24 hours or at the earliest reasonable opportunity.

Employees working remotely must follow any Board policies with respect to working alone or in isolation. At a minimum, employees working remotely must check in with their supervisor (or designate) both at the start and end of their shift.

Employees on a remote work arrangement will be covered by WCB for job-related injuries that occur in the course and scope of employment while working remotely. The Board will not be responsible for any injuries that may occur at the remote work location that are not related to work.

The employee remains liable for injuries to third parties that occur on the employee's premises.

### **Ad Hoc Arrangements**

Temporary remote work arrangements may be approved for unique situations or circumstances such as inclement weather, pandemics, special projects or business travel. These arrangements are approved on an as-needed basis only, with no expectation of ongoing continuance. The remote work policy applies under ad-hoc circumstances, however, such arrangements do not require a formal remote work agreement.

### **End of Agreement**

At the end of a remote work agreement, employees must return all Board property and supplies in a timely manner, and may receive notices from the Board in this regard.