2492 – TELECOMMUTING[1] GUIDELINES

Barton supports telecommuting from alternative worksite offices to create a supportive work environment. Telecommuting is a voluntary work arrangement in which an eligible employee with approval "works one or more days each work week from an alternative worksite instead of commuting to a work place." These guidelines do not apply to independent contractors.

Communication during telecommuting arrangements may be by phone, modem, fax, pager, or other agreed upon means. Work and telecommunication equipment may be owned and maintained by the employee or by the college.

Employee selection shall be based on specific, written, work-related criteria established by the direct supervisor with reasonable accommodation for employees who are permanently or temporarily disabled.

GENERAL TERMS OF IMPLEMENTATION

- All approved telecommuting schedules are discretionary and require approval as defined under *Steps for Initiating Telecommuting.*
- Telecommuting used as a transitional work program in aiding an employee's return to work from disability shall be administered consistent with existing policies, procedures and laws.
- Telecommuting may not substitute or subsidize other non-work related activities.
- Telecommuters are expected to adhere to college rules, regulations, policies and procedures regarding security and confidentiality. Employees must follow IT Access procedures established by the college. See the Barton website for more information at **http://internal.bartonccc.edu/it/help-desk.html**
- Any employee with remote access will install virus-protection software and will ensure that the virus definitions are kept current.
- The employee is responsible for maintaining employee owned telecommuting equipment. Refer to Maintenance, Repair, and Replacement of Equipment section.
- Telecommuting employees are responsible for setting aside an alternative worksite work space that is safe, and free of obstructions and hazardous materials.
- Either administration or the employee may terminate telecommuting for any reason, at any time.

STEPS FOR INITIATING TELECOMMUTING

Either employee or administration may propose a telecommuting work option for the employee.

1) If proposed by the employee, the employee completes a Telecommuting Proposal Form and submits it to his/her direct supervisor.
2) The employee and direct supervisor will assess the feasibility of telecommuting and determine telecommuting options. The Direct Supervisor:
   a) considers proposal to implement alternate work arrangement for particular position;
   b) reviews the following: functions/tasks of position under consideration, departmental staffing needs, space and budgetary considerations;
   c) consults with Human Resources as necessary on proposal;
   d) contacts his/her immediate supervisor for secondary approval.

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[1] Telecommuting refers to a working arrangement or work style where an employee regularly does his or her work off-site, or outside of the principal office. Telecommuters typically work from home one or more days a week and communicate with the office using the telephone, the Internet or other telecommunications technology.

3) If approved, the employee and direct supervisor complete a Telecommuting Agreement. *If not approved, the direct supervisor will notify the employee of the decision in writing.*
4) The direct supervisor gives the employee the following documents:
   a) Telecommuting Guidelines;
   b) Signed Telecommuting Agreement (and retains a copy for the office and sends a copy to Human Resources); and
   c) Supplementary materials, as appropriate.
5) Direct Supervisor notifies employee(s) to begin telecommuting and monitors arrangement(s); maintains open communications and discusses concerns with employee(s) as needed.

SUPPORT DOCUMENTS
Supportive checklists include: Supervisor's Checklist for Telecommuters; Telecommuting Proposal; Telecommuting Agreement; Receipt of College Equipment and Alternative Worksite Safety Checklist for Telecommuters.

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR SUCCESSFUL TELECOMMUTING
Employee selection shall not be based on seniority. Selection should include reasonable accommodation for employees who are permanently or temporarily disabled.

Prospective telecommuters and their supervisors should assess whether telecommuting is a viable work option as follows:

1. Decide if a job is amenable in part or in whole, to being performed away from the main office.

   At supervisor's discretion, a job is amenable to telecommuting if the job or some components of it can be done off-site without disruption to the flow of work and communication. Examples of job functions that are amenable to telecommuting include, but are not limited to: researching, processing, dispensing of information, report writing, or communications that can be done from a distance.

2. Ensure that work can be equitably distributed so that telecommuting schedules do not require in-office staff to do the telecommuter's work. Care should also be taken to ensure that telecommuters continue to have access to needed office support. The employee should be able to be reached by phone and/or email during assigned work hours.

3. The candidate for telecommuting should display work-related behaviors consistent with those of successful telecommuters, including:
   - Reliable and responsible discharge of work duties;
   - Independent with the ability to work effectively with minimal supervision;
   - Low need for face-to-face interaction, self-motivated, flexible, organized, and good communication skills.
   - Full understanding of the operations of his/her department and his/her job duties;
   - Has the trust of his/her supervisor and is honorable;
   - Is able to establish priorities and has demonstrated effective time management habits;
   - Pursues high-quality work production;
   - Can maintain a safe alternative worksite work area, free from distractions;
   - Performs work that results in specific, measurable work product;
   - Who have a job that can be monitored for output, not by the time spent doing the job.

4. Telecommuting may not be appropriate for candidates who:
   - Do not feel comfortable with physical isolation from other employees.
   - Do not work well independently.
   - Cannot create an alternative worksite work space that is safe (for them, for College equipment and files) and free from distractions.
   - Feel they are “out of the loop” and overlooked when it comes to various workplace opportunities.

SCHEDULING
Telecommuting schedules should balance individual department needs for face-to-face meetings.

Office needs take precedence over telecommute days. A worker must forgo telecommuting if needed in the office on a regularly scheduled telecommute day or to attend a meeting.

HOURS OF WORK AND OVERTIME
All approved telecommuting schedules are discretionary and require supervisory approval. Supervisors may approve any work schedule for a telecommuter as long as it is consistent with the policies and procedures of the College. Telecommuters should provide communication regarding activities, location and availability regularly.

Supervisors, in accordance with the policies and procedures of the College, must authorize overtime. Compensation will be authorized by supervisors according to personnel policy.

As with any work schedule, temporary telecommuting assignments or schedule changes may be made at supervisor’s discretion to meet needs or to accommodate an employee’s request. Telecommuting may not substitute or subsidize other non-work related activities.

If the College should be officially closed, telecommuting employees (those telecommuting on either a full-time, part-time or occasional basis) will be compensated as follows:

- If an employee is scheduled to telecommute on the day that the campus closes due to inclement weather (or other reason outside the College’s control (does not include closures under the Holidays and Breaks procedure)), the employee will either be required to work that day or take the appropriate vacation/personal day if they do not work, unless the reason for closure is due to the College having a connectivity or computer issue making them unable to work.
- For those employees that always telecommute, campus closure does not affect their requirement to work. Employees that always work off-site or outside of the principal office do not receive closure compensation, unless the reason for closure is due to the College having a connectivity or computer issue making them unable to work and they work full-time.
- Employees that receive the benefit of telecommuting, do so with the understanding that they are responsible for the various connections which allow them to telecommute. If an employee that typically telecommutes cannot do so due to problems with their own connections (weather related or other), the employee will be required to use any accrued vacation/personal leave during the period while they cannot work to satisfy their normal workload shift.

CONFIDENTIAL AND SENSITIVE INFORMATION

Telecommuters are expected to adhere to College rules, regulations, policies and procedures regarding security and confidentiality for the computer, its data and information, and any other information handled in the course of work. Employees must use IT access procedures established by the College.

MAINTENANCE, REPAIR, AND REPLACEMENT OF EQUIPMENT

The employee is responsible for maintaining and repairing employee owned telecommuting equipment at personal expense and on personal time. The College is responsible for maintaining, repairing and replacing College owned equipment issued to telecommuters. In the event of equipment malfunction, the telecommuter must notify his/her supervisor immediately. If repairs will take some time, the department will find alternative means to continue the telecommuter's work including asking the telecommuter to report to the main office until the equipment is usable.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Telecommuting employees are responsible for setting aside a space in their alternative worksite for work and ensuring that it is safe, and free of obstructions and hazardous materials. They must ensure that their alternative worksite complies with all building codes, health and safety requirements, and that it is free of hazardous materials. The College may verify that the alternative worksite office meets these requirements.

If a telecommuter incurs a work-related injury while telecommuting, worker's compensation law and rules apply. Employees must notify their supervisors and Human Resources immediately and complete all necessary requested documents regarding the injury.

TERMINATION OF PARTICIPATION

The option to implement telecommuting in a department is at the sole discretion of supervisor. Either supervisor or the employee may terminate an employee's telecommuting arrangement for any reason, at any time. If an employee requests to terminate telecommuting, the supervisor will arrange for the employee to begin working at the main office as quickly as possible, but no later than 30 days after notification by the employee. At their sole discretion, supervisors may terminate or modify an employee's telecommuting arrangement without notice, but when possible should provide an employee with as much advance notice as feasible.

Failure by the telecommuter to maintain an alternative worksite office that is safe and free from distraction so as not to interfere with work, provides cause for terminating an employee's telecommuting arrangement.

Supervisors determine whether telecommuting is appropriate, based upon work requirements. Those who previously had a telecommuting arrangement are not assured of a telecommuting assignment when returning from a leave of absence or after a job transfer.

PERIODIC PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Supervisors should meet regularly with their telecommuters to review performance, including any issues related to the telecommuting arrangement. As needed, a documented summary of these meetings should be maintained by the supervisor. If a telecommuter's performance is found to be unsatisfactory (as documented on the Performance Improvement Plan), his/her telecommuting arrangement may be terminated.

EMPLOYEE REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURES
Responsibility for maintaining the telecommuter's alternative worksite equipment should be defined before the start of telecommuting.

Each department must arrange to pay for business expenses incurred by telecommuters. A requisition form may be used for usual and ordinary college expenses. Employees should retain copies of appropriate reimbursable bills, which are to be attached to the requisition form.

The College will not pay for the following types of expenses:

- Usage fees for privately owned computers.
- Utility costs associated with the use of the computer or occupation of the alternative worksite.
- Travel to the main office.
- Telecommuter purchased office supplies. Telecommuters should obtain supplies from the main office during non-telecommuting days.

RENEWAL OF TELECOMMUTING AGREEMENTS
The telecommuter and supervisor must complete a new telecommuting agreement annually. The telecommuter and supervisor must also complete a new telecommuting agreement whenever there is a major job change (such as a promotion), whenever the telecommuter or supervisor changes positions or whenever a new supervisor is hired. The original telecommuting agreement is to be given to the employee, with copies made for the direct supervisor and Human Resources.

Telecommuting was selected because of the combination of job, employee characteristics, and supervisor characteristics. A change in any one of these may require a review of the telecommuting arrangement.

(Based on policy 1470; approved by President on 4/28/14)