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Agency of Administration

MEMORANDUM

TO: Appointing Authorities, Elected Officials and State Employees

CC: Judicial and Legislative Branches

FROM: Beth Fastiggi, Commissioner, Department of Human Resources *B2*

DATE: August 6, 2020

SUBJECT: Commissioner's Guidance Re: Remote Work Extended to December 31, 2020

This is a follow-up to the August 6, 2020 advisory from the [Secretary of Administration](#) informing appointing authorities and state employees that employees should expect to work remotely, when able to do so due to the pandemic, until at least December 31, 2020. State employees will be notified, on or before November 1, 2020, should circumstances warrant an extension of the December 31st date.

Some employees may be required to return to the worksite as we continue to gradually reopen the economy and offer more “in person” services. Others will need to find a way to manage school reopening schedules. Agency and Department leadership, as well as managers and supervisors, should encourage and accommodate flexible schedules (for both remote and onsite work) to the extent possible to allow employees to balance their personal, family, and professional commitments. Employees and supervisors must discuss requests for flexible schedules and can always reach out to their [HR Business Partner for assistance](#).

Since working remotely may be a challenge and will be the norm for many employees in the coming months, it is important to continue to learn how to best manage your work, and teams, in a remote environment. Supervisors and employees are encouraged to use the available [online courses and resources for remote workers](#) and [ADS training](#). There are a multitude of training options, including ergonomics for the remote worker, using Microsoft Teams, how to manage a remote workforce, working remotely to maximize productivity, and more.

Appointing authorities and supervisors are encouraged to provide schedule flexibility for employees under the circumstances brought on by the pandemic so employees can successfully work a standard workweek. Those hours may be days, nights, and weekends – with some standard flex time agreed to with the supervisor. Supervisors will be expected to establish performance measures for remote workers, including developing strategies for enhanced productivity and providing frequent review and feedback.

Appointing authorities and supervisors who manage operations that may require a return to an office setting should work collaboratively with the employee or employees to identify alternatives to being in an office setting on a regular basis, while still meeting performance expectations such as in-person customer interaction by-appointment-only, split shifts or days in the office, or centralizing certain office functions to a single person.

Appointing authorities and supervisors who receive requests from employees who have not been required to return to the worksite for operational reasons shall consider those requests on a case by case basis using the following criteria listed in order of priority below:

1. More than 25% of job duties require a return to an office setting,
2. Home internet speeds or other connectivity issues are insufficient to support full execution of job duties;
or,
3. Home office ergonomics or other conditions in the home environment are unsuitable for full-time work.

To ensure physical distancing required in the workplace, the maximum number of approved requests will be limited to no more than 25% of the fire safety occupancy of the office.

A request is not required for occasional, non-recurring access such as might be needed to retrieve paper files or perform document printing or scanning.

For those currently at their worksites, and those who may be returning for any reason, your health and safety and those of the public you serve are paramount. Masks are now required of all Vermonters when physical distancing is not possible, and this requirement applies to all state worksites as well. Employees who return to the worksite, even if on a limited basis, will be expected to undergo training and comply with all current safety and sanitation requirements.

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