



Railroad Commission of Texas

Telework Plan

August 1, 2025

Revisions Approved
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Telework Plan

Pursuant to the Texas Government Code 658.011(a)(1) & (2), telework may be offered by state agencies to their employees to address:

1. the lack of available office space, or
2. to provide reasonable flexibility that enhances the agency's ability to achieve its mission.

In addition to this plan being posted on the Commission's intranet, it will be posted on the Commission's external website pursuant to 658.012(b).

Plan Purpose

The purpose of the Telework Plan is to describe the details of the Railroad Commission's telework program. Eligible Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) employees may apply to participate in the program pursuant to a Telework Agreement. This document provides the RRC's procedures governing telework and implements teleworking as an effective way to meet the business needs of the agency and to achieve its mission.

The RRC is a **results-driven, service-oriented, and collaborative** agency. The RRC may permit telework only when an employee can continue to maintain these core values and when it is in the best interest of the agency. Teleworking should be seamless and not impact customer service, employee performance, or business operations, and can be revoked at any time without notice. Employees should be able to perform all duties as though they were present in the office, including but not limited to attending meetings (in-person or remotely), preparing documents and forms, and collaborating with other employees and customers.

Supervisors are expected to implement the plan equitably and to manage employees who telework and those who work in the office using the same standards and policies, including with respect to monitoring and measuring performance, evaluations, training, and addressing performance issues.

Nondiscrimination

The RRC shall comply fully with the nondiscrimination provisions of all federal and state laws and regulations by assuring that no person shall be excluded from consideration for selection, appointment, training, promotion, retention, or any other covered personnel action, nor be denied any benefits or participation in any educational programs or activities which it operates, on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, hair texture or style, national origin, genetic information, citizenship or immigration status, disability, military status, or age.

Definitions

Designated Headquarters: An agency-owned or leased facility to which an RRC employee is assigned and approved by the agency (e.g., William B. Travis building or district office).



Teleworking: A work arrangement in which an employee conducts work for the agency from an alternative workplace other than the assigned designated headquarters for a portion, or all, of the work period, such as home or satellite work center, as approved by the supervisor, division director, human resources and the Executive Director or designee.

Teleworker: An employee who has been approved to telework and is actively teleworking. See Request Progress.

Telework Request and Agreement: An agreement the employee must sign to begin the telework arrangement. The signed agreement will be placed in the employees personnel file in human resources. Telework agreements are not an employment agreement or a guarantee of future employment. RRC employees are employed at-will.

Alternative Workplace: The primary area at which a Teleworker completes RRC work when they are not working from their designated headquarters. This does not include field job sites for an approved “out rider” such as an inspector, a well plugger, or a district cleanup coordinator, etc.

Eligibility

Position eligibility is determined by the Executive Director pursuant to Texas Government Code. Participation in teleworking is voluntary and applies to full-time and part-time employees.

Given the nature of the job responsibilities, telework does not apply to outriders.

Designated headquarters (HQ) transfer is not allowed as part of a telework agreement. Employees are responsible for commute to and from the assigned HQ for in-office days.

The criteria below will be used to establish eligibility for an employee requesting to telework.

Employee Eligible Criteria

An employee must have:

- a) Been employed in a business unit that is determined by the agency to be eligible for teleworking.
- b) Received at least a 3.0 rating on their most recent annual evaluation (if applicable).
- c) Not received a Progressive Discipline (written warning) within the past 6 months from the date of the request. See Employee Handbook for details on disciplinary actions.
- d) Not received a valid customer complaint within the past 6 months.
- e) Not had any confirmed non-compliance with the RRC employee handbook or other agency requirements within the past 6 months.
- f) Completed all agency required trainings, including but not limited to Annual Security Awareness Training.

In addition to the eligibility criteria listed above, supervisors may take into consideration other factors,



such as specific job duties and the employee's time-management skills when deciding on a telework request.

This Telework Plan does not preclude new employees from requesting telework.

Telework Schedule

Employees may telework up to two days per week. Employees may telework on Monday and/or Tuesday, or Thursday and/or Friday as approved by their supervisor. There is no telework allowed on Wednesdays in these units. Business units must maintain 50% in-person coverage in the designated headquarters on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.

Due to office space limitations, the Executive Director may approve certain business units to telework up to five days a week.

General Provisions

1. Teleworking is an agency option, not an employee right. It is a privilege, and a flexible option extended to employees with the clear understanding that agency business and customer needs shall be met first. Not every business unit is eligible for telework. Telework is not an option that an employee can demand or has a right to expect.
2. Teleworking can be revoked at any time without notice for any individual employee(s), department, division, or agency if the agency's business needs are not being met or the employee is not meeting expectations. Revocation will be exercised in accordance with this plan; specifically, the section titled, "Canceling a Telework Agreement."
3. Telework is a flexible option that may be offered to staff and must not conflict with meeting agency needs. When an employee is not teleworking, the employee will be expected to work at their designated headquarters. Teleworking is generally home-based where the employee works in an area in their residence specifically set aside as a workspace to be used during teleworking hours.
4. Teleworking does not change the required number of hours that an employee must work per week. Teleworkers are required to work their full schedule. The RRC workweek begins on Saturday and ends on Friday and the normal business hours are Monday through Friday, 8am - 5pm. An employee should follow the process for requesting an alternate work schedule if a different schedule is desired. Any changes to a Teleworker's work hours must be reviewed and approved by the supervisor in advance in accordance with Employee Handbook.
5. Changes to the telework schedule may be made to meet agency needs or to accommodate absences by other employees (e.g., extended leaves or vacations). For example, a supervisor may require an employee to come into their designated headquarters when the employee is scheduled to telework if there is a business need, such as attending an in-person meeting. If the Teleworker wants to change their approved schedule, the Teleworker must complete a new



Telework Request and Agreement form.

6. A Teleworker must request approval from their supervisor or designee to work additional hours that would earn regular compensatory or FSLA compensatory time for the Teleworker.
7. Unless otherwise authorized by Commission policy or the Executive Director, in the event a Teleworker's designated headquarters is closed due to inclement weather, emergencies, or other office closures, they are expected to continue working at their alternative workplace.
8. In the event something occurs that prevents the Teleworker from working remotely, the Teleworker must notify their supervisor. The Teleworker must report to their designated headquarters or request approval to take leave.
9. An approved Telework Agreement will be reviewed annually for possible renewal. An approved Telework Agreement is subject to change at any time or not renewed if any of the eligibility requirements change, requirements of this plan are not met, and/or teleworking is no longer beneficial to the agency and/or the employee.
10. An employee who Teleworks will be provided adequate workspace for days worked at their designated headquarters. This space may not be reserved for a Teleworker in the same manner as an employee who works daily at the designated headquarters. For example, office space may be in a shared environment and may vary from day to day.
11. If a Teleworker travels to their designated headquarters for any reason, they will not be reimbursed for travel expenses.
12. At the supervisor's discretion, work processes, communication requirements and other requirements may be different when working from an alternative workplace. For example, a Teleworker may be required to email their supervisor when their day begins or ends.
13. The Teleworker's salary, job responsibilities, benefits, and employer-sponsored insurance coverage will not change due to teleworking.
14. Teleworking is not a replacement for dependent care, and it is up to the employee to obtain appropriate care to ensure that all standards of job performance are met.
15. For unique situations not discussed in this Telework Plan, the Executive Director or designee may issue a telework decision, on a case-by-case basis, for the best interest of the agency.
16. Workspace may be reassigned at the discretion of the agency for business needs. For teleworking employees, designated or shared workspace will be made available at RRC facilities.

Criteria to Evaluate an Employee's Teleworking Effectiveness

At a minimum, employees will be required to do the following while teleworking:



- Maintain regular communication. Teleworkers must be available during RRC normal business hours or their approved alternate schedule. They must return calls and emails within a reasonable timeframe to demonstrate availability during working hours. They must notify their supervisor in advance if they will be unavailable.
- Meet all standards of job performance for their position and meet any additional criteria as outlined in the annual Employee Performance Evaluation.
- Comply with all RRC policies, regardless of work location.
- Be on time for virtual meetings and participate as needed in those meetings. Furthermore, an employee should be prepared to turn on the camera in all virtual meetings...
- Be flexible with their telework schedule when agency needs require a change in that schedule.

A supervisor should always provide regular feedback to an employee to ensure the employee's work performance is satisfactory and in the case of a Teleworker, to ensure the job duties remain eligible for telework.

Designated Headquarters and Out-of-state Employees

Changes to an employee's designated headquarters must be approved by the Executive Director in writing prior to the transfer. Employment of an individual who resides outside of Texas must be approved by the Executive Director in writing prior to making a job offer to the candidate. The Commission may retract, rescind, or revoke these approvals at the discretion of the Executive Director.

Health and Safety

A Teleworker is expected to maintain the same standards of health and safety at their alternative workplace as they do at their designated headquarters.

If an employee suffers a work-related injury while teleworking, the employee would normally be eligible to apply for workers' compensation benefits. Workers' compensation benefits may be applied for when injuries occur that arise from performing Commission job duties and in the course of employment. An injured employee must notify their supervisor immediately and complete all required documents regarding the injury.

An RRC representative may visit the alternative workplace as part of a health and safety inspection. The visit will be prearranged during normal work hours at a mutually agreed upon time. The division director and Human Resources must approve this visit prior to scheduling.

Equipment, Supplies and Work Area

Except for computing equipment assigned to an employee (e.g., laptops and power cables), the RRC will not provide additional state-owned equipment for use when teleworking (e.g., monitors, keyboards,



etc.). The agency may provide software or other supplies, if appropriate for telework. Employees may not receive the same equipment, and the type of equipment that is made available will be based on the requirements of the position and the availability of resources.

An employee shall not use a personal computer device (laptop, desktop, etc.) for Commission business. If the situation warrants the use of personal equipment, the employee must first confirm that the personal device has updated antivirus and security software that is in compliance with Commission IT policies before the Telework Agreement can be approved.

Teleworkers are responsible for securing reliable internet access in their alternative workplace. Teleworkers are not reimbursed for internet charges, phone lines, utilities, insurance, or any other costs incurred due to working remotely. Other than basic office supplies obtained from their designated headquarters, Teleworkers are responsible for providing all other supplies and furniture (e.g., chairs, desk, or file cabinets) for their alternative workplace.

The RRC is not responsible for the loss, damage, wear, repair, maintenance, and/or replacement of non-state-owned items that are a result of teleworking. When state equipment is used at an alternative workplace, the employee is financially responsible for state-owned equipment if it is lost, stolen, or damaged due to the employee's negligence, misuse, or abuse.

The employee's alternative workspace must be in a professional, healthy, and safe environment. Teleworkers must establish a working environment in which they are not subject to frequent interruptions. Arrangements must be made so that interference with work and personal disruptions are kept to a minimum.

Information Technology and Cybersecurity

The safety and security of agency information and resources is extremely important. The requirements below apply to all agency and employee-owned hardware and software regardless of the workplace location.

1. All employees, regardless of work location, must abide by the following policies and guidelines available Information Technology Services (ITS) section on Inside RRC:
 - a. *RRC Security Guidelines*
 - b. *Electronic Mail Retention Policy*
 - c. *Internet and Intranet Policy*
 - d. *Electronic Communications Policy*
2. All employees must comply with ITS Help Desk and Security team requests for all manual actions on security patches and software updates.
3. Products or programs the employee develops while performing work responsibilities at an alternative workplace remain the property of the agency.



4. Employees are required to follow all security rules, copyright laws, and manufacturer's licensing agreements. State-owned software may not be duplicated except as allowed under law or licensing agreements.
5. Teleworkers may not download confidential agency files to personal devices.
6. Teleworkers will protect all RRC data/information in accordance with the data classification and protection requirements as posted in the ITS section of Inside RRC.
7. Only approved remote access solutions such as GoToMyPC, Virtual Private Network (VPN) and Microsoft Office 365 provided by the RRC can be used to access necessary files, systems, or applications.
8. Teleworkers will notify their supervisor of any malfunction of necessary equipment if the equipment is used for RRC business, regardless of ownership. The employee may have to work at their designated headquarters until the equipment is functional.
9. Technical support will be provided as appropriate.
10. The agency is responsible for the preventive maintenance and repair of agency equipment. Agency equipment may have to be returned to the appropriate office for repair or configuration and the Teleworker is responsible for returning the equipment as directed.

Confidential and Sensitive Information

To protect confidential and sensitive information, a Teleworker will meet all the requirements of the Public Information Act (PIA) and other applicable laws. Teleworkers must also follow all agency policies and procedures including data security and confidentiality for their computers, electronic and print data, and all other agency information.

Teleworkers will be held responsible for the loss, disappearance, or theft of documents when attributable to an employee's actions. They may not take materials with restricted access out of an RRC office nor access such materials by computer at an alternative workplace without prior approval or appropriate security access. In addition, Teleworkers are responsible for preventing unauthorized viewing or use of agency data or equipment by any unauthorized individuals, including but not limited to family members and visitors.

Request Process (should be done through DocuSign)

Step	Responsible Party	Required Action
1	Employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The employee completes a Telework Request and Agreement Form found in the Human Resources section on Inside RRC and sends it to their supervisor.• At least one month prior to the expiration of an approved Telework Request and Agreement, the employee must complete a new Telework Request and Agreement for renewal. Telework approvals may lapse if a



		renewal is not received by the Supervisor in time.
2	Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluates eligibility based on the Telework Plan and additional resources. Discusses with the employee any issues or concerns with the request. The supervisor recommends approval or denial of the request, completes and forwards the forms to management for review.
3	Division Director, HR Director and Executive Director or designee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approves or denies the request. Human Resources will keep approved requests in the employee's personnel file. Copies will be provided to the employee and supervisor.
4	Employee and Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both will develop performance standards for specific tasks, if applicable. The supervisor will communicate the new schedule to the team, as appropriate.
5	Employee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begins teleworking schedule.

Pursuant to Texas Government Code, the Telework Agreement for each employee will be reviewed annually by the agency for possible renewal. The review is necessary to determine if the teleworking arrangement continues to meet the needs of the RRC and if the Teleworker is adhering to the requirements in the Agreement and the Telework Plan.

Canceling a Telework Agreement

The RRC may cancel a Telework Agreement at any time, with or without notice. A supervisor, division director, or executive director may discontinue a Telework Agreement for an employee or a business unit at any time when the employee no longer meets the eligibility requirements or telecommuting is no longer a viable option.

If a Teleworker receives a Progressive Discipline (written warning), their Telework Agreement may be canceled.

The Telework Agreement may also be canceled because of a change in:

- department or division,
- supervisor,
- the Teleworker's job performance,
- the Teleworker's job responsibilities, or
- other business-related reasons.

An employee may cancel a Telework Agreement at any time with written notice to their supervisor. The employee and supervisor will agree on the timeline for return to the designated headquarters. Management may require a longer notice period to provide enough time to secure adequate workspace in the designated headquarters.

The supervisor must notify human resources prior to canceling a Telework Agreement for any reason.



Return of State Property

It is the employee's responsibility to return all agency property back to the designated headquarters immediately if either employment is terminated or the Telework Agreement is canceled. This includes all notes, data, reference materials, drawings, memoranda, reports, records, including electronic files, equipment, software, supplies, and any other RRC property in the employee's possession or control. The return of these items should be coordinated with the Teleworker's manager. The agency is not responsible for costs, damages, or losses associated with the termination of a Telework Agreement.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Teleworking may be available as a reasonable accommodation for employees who have qualifying disabilities under the ADA. If an employee with a disability believes teleworking may be a reasonable accommodation, the employee should contact Human Resources to request an ADA accommodation.