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***Frequently Asked Questions***  
**Policy 1.61, Commonwealth Telework Policy**

**1. What is the purpose for the Telework Policy?**

Policy 1.61, Teleworking supports Governor Youngkin's commitment to deliver best-in-class government services and operational efficiencies. Governor Youngkin firmly believes that the public is best served when employees are working together in an office-centric environment where all benefit from direct mentorship, collaboration, and peer-to-peer learning.

**2. Who is covered by Policy 1.61, Teleworking?**

Policy 1.61, Teleworking applies to classified and salaried employees within Executive Branch agencies. Other branches of government are encouraged to adopt the same policy requirements as these have proved successful in promoting excellence and productivity. Teleworking may be appropriate for some positions but may not be a suitable alternative for positions that require public-facing interactions with customers and other stakeholders, or for work that cannot be performed from a remote work location.

**3. What are the policy requirements for Executive Branch Agencies?**

Agency responsibilities include:

- Determining which positions are eligible for telework.
- The suitable duration of telework days per week that comports with Agency business needs and other considerations.
- Establishing an annual review period to renew or revise existing telework agreements
  - The annual renewal periods may be determined by the Agency to comport with operational business needs.
  - Renewals of existing telework agreements that do not require revisions may be continued provided the agreements do not impede the employee's ability to successfully perform the job duties outlined in the position description without compromising performance and productivity.
  - Telework agreements that require revisions (e.g., number of teleworking days, the selected workdays for teleworking, or other teleworking criteria) must proceed through the approval process outlined in Policy 1.61.
  - Telework agreements must be completed using the COVApp Telework Agreement Application or for agencies unable to use the Application, the Standard Telework Agreement form
  - New telework agreements are best considered during on-boarding or during other time periods that provides the new employee with appropriate mentoring, training, and peer-to-peer interactions within the assigned work environment.

**4. How is eligibility for teleworking decided?**

Eligibility is determined by the requirements and associated tasks of the position, and their ability to be fulfilled completely and effectively in a remote environment. Teleworking agreements are determined by Agency leadership and their assessment of how work can

best be performed. Other considerations may also include accessibility and availability of relevant training and mentoring required to successfully perform all job duties, and documented performance and conduct issues that may require more direct supervisory oversight.

## **5. Who evaluates and determines the approvals of Telework Agreements**

Policy 1.61, Teleworking establishes a multi-layered process for reviewing and approving Telework Agreements.

- Agency Head:
  - Where one day a week is requested as a telework day.
  - Temporary telework, no more than two weeks, for temporary circumstances such as family illness, school closing, weather advisories, etc.
  - Annual renewals of existing Telework Agreements that do not require revisions.
- Cabinet Secretary:
  - Where two days a week are requested as telework days for new or revised Telework Agreements.
- Chief of Staff:
  - Where more than two days a week are requested as telework days for new or revised Telework Agreements.

## **6. Can telework be used as a job accommodation due to an injury, illness, or disability?**

An Agency Head can approve telework for up to two weeks for temporary circumstances such as family illness, injury, illness, or disability. Unique work circumstances may be accommodated by telework in individual cases.

Telework agreements established as a form of reasonable accommodation or a temporary accommodation shall not be submitted through the approval process established in Policy 1.61, Teleworking. Telework granted as an accommodation should be documented through the agency's accommodation process and related documentation must be treated as confidential.

## **7. If the office is closed for an emergency, such as inclement weather, are employees required to telework?**

Procedural information for emergency closing is included in the annual telework agreement. Agencies are also advised to communicate the telework requirements to their employees periodically and remind employees of the expectations prior to inclement weather closings.

## **8. Will Agency Heads be able to request blanket approvals for employees to telework two or more days per week for those who are in non-public facing jobs?**

Telework Agreements shall be processed individually for each employee. If teams and team members need to work together, the scheduled telework days of individual team members should be coordinated to ensure consistency of telework schedules to meet team objectives. Each employee must have an individual telework agreement that reflects the team telework schedule.

**9. Under what circumstances may a Telework Agreement be revoked?**

Agency business needs and operational requirements may change in accordance with legislated mandates, stakeholder needs and expectations, and revised strategic plans. In other instances, an employee's performance or conduct may result in a revocation of approval to telework. Teleworking is an opportunity for eligible employees and is not an obligation of the Commonwealth.

**10. What support is offered to working parents or other caregivers?**

The Governor and his Administration understand the complexity and expense of raising a family and/or providing care to elder family members or adult dependents who are incapacitated due to medical conditions or disabilities. It is important for employees to candidly discuss with their supervisors and agency heads about how their caregiving needs can best be achieved through telework, alternate work schedules and/or flexible leave approvals. The Department of Human Resource Management (DRHM) maintains a resource page specifically for employees who are also parents. Please visit here for further information.

**11. Can variable telework days be selected on the Telework Agreement which permit the employee to telework on the day(s) of their choice?**

Workplaces generally operate more efficiently and effectively when work schedules and employee availability and accessibility is planned. Work site staffing coverage should be structured to ensure availability and accessibility of services for customers and other stakeholders. Managers may approve occasional changes to the approved telework day, but this should not be established as a routine practice. The COVApp Telework Agreement system requires the selection of pre-determined telework days.