Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness

State of Louisiana

JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR



CASEY TINGLE

Telework Policy Policy Number: GEN-0012

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Approval:

Casey Tingle, Director

I. POLICY

It is the policy of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) to provide telework as a viable, flexible work option when both the employee and the employee's position are suitable for such arrangement. GOHSEP aims to increase efficiencies while also sustaining the recruitment and retention of highly qualified employees. Business-related, operational needs drive all decisions regarding the suitability of positions for telework, approval of employees to telework, and the workdays on which eligible employees may be authorized to telework. Consideration will be given to the characteristics of the position, including the suitability of customary job duties to be performed from a remote location, and the demonstrated performance, productivity, accountability and dependability of the individual employee.

Telework is not a right or an entitlement, and is not available to all employees nor applicable to all positions. Approved Telework Agreements are not permanent, do not create an employment contract, and do not change the terms or conditions of employment. Furthermore, authorized telework will not change an employee's compensation or benefits.

Approval to telework may be modified or rescinded at any time at the discretion of GOHSEP. For continuity of operations or other business necessity, the telework privilege also may be restricted or suspended for certain employees, project teams or full organizational units for a period of time. As examples, employees may be required to work in-office full-time throughout the legislative session, during budget development or fiscal year-end close, due to a backlog of work, or to meet a project deadline.

Page 2

Issued: April 19, 2010

GOHSEP recognizes that many employees prefer to work in an office setting. As such, telework is voluntary in most instances. However, to meet business needs, the Director may impose mandatory telework requirements during times of emergency, disaster or crisis. Telework may also be imposed due to an office closure, office space constraints, or as an accommodation.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a formal policy and guidelines for telework. Consequently, GOHSEP recognizes that telework may:

- Enhance recruitment by promoting state government as an innovative employer;
- Improve retention through increased job satisfaction and employee morale;
- Provide for continued operations and delivery of services during crises;
- Assist employees with balancing work/life needs;
- Reduce employees' commuting costs, and;
- Reduce traffic congestion and vehicle emissions.

III. APPLICABILITY

This telework privilege authorized by this policy is applicable to all eligible employees of GOHSEP whose jobs can be performed from a remote location.

IV. DEFINITIONS

Telework: A work flexibility arrangement under which an employee performs the duties and responsibilities of their position from an approved remote worksite. Unless otherwise specified, telework herein refers to both telework-formal and teleworksituational or for a limited number of days per week.

Telework Agreement: A written document, signed by the employee and authorized by the Director, that details the terms and conditions upon which the employee is authorized to telework.

Telework-Formal: Authorized telework which occurs as part of an approved on-going, regular schedule or within established limits. (E.g., full time or a set number of days per week.)

Telework-Situational: Telework which is approved on a case-by-case basis, where hours worked are not part of a previously approved, on-going and regular telework schedule. (E.g., telework approved as a result of inclement weather, declared emergency, reasonable accommodations, or office closures.)

Teleworker: An employee who is working from their approved alternative worksite.

Primary Worksite: The employee's usual and customary worksite.

Page 3

Issued: April 19, 2010

For the purpose of this policy, one of the following locations are the employee's primary worksite, unless specifically addressed elsewhere in the employee's terms of employment:

- GOHSEP Headquarters, located at 7667 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806
- GOHSEP Bon Carre, located at 7389 Florida Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70806

Remote Worksite: An approved worksite other than the employee's primary worksite, at which an employee is authorized to conduct telework. Absent exceptional circumstances, the remote worksite is the employee's home address as designated in LEO.

V. INELIGIBILITY FOR TELEWORK

GOHSEP recognizes that the duties of some positions cannot be performed from a remote location. When a position's suitability for telework is questionable, the final determination will be made by the Assistant Deputy Director or Deputy Director, Chief of Staff in collaboration with the Director.

Additionally, not all employees are eligible for remote work consideration. Specific employees ineligible for telework are:

- Employees serving in part-time positions;
- Employees serving as student workers;
- Employees in the initial six months of employment in their current position;
- Employees whose in-office presence is deemed essential by the Director;
- Employees whose most recent PES rating is "Needs Improvement/Unsuccessful";
- Employees who have demonstrated an inability to effectively and efficiently perform and be productive in accordance with acceptable standards, and;
- Employees who are unable or unwilling to acquire and maintain required technology services in their remote worksite at their own expense.

VI. SUITABILITY FOR TELEWORK

A. Position Suitability

In general, a position suitable for telework is one whose duties can be performed from a remote work location while maintaining effective service quality, timeliness and delivery, and without negatively impacting unit operations. Jobs best suited for telework are those that:

- Require tasks that can be performed from any location;
- Have clearly defined tasks and objectives;

Page 4

Issued: April 19, 2010

- Can be monitored by output rather than time spent doing the job;
- Have measurable work activities and identifiable product deliverables;
- Have defined objectives with specified timeframes and milestones;
- Require independent work (writing, reading, research, telephoning, planning, programming, word processing, data entry, etc.);
- Require limited face-to-face interaction with supervisors, co-workers, clients, vendors and the public;
- Can be performed in compliance with privacy and security requirements;
- Do not adversely impact the effectiveness of a project team;
- Require limited access to material and files maintained at the primary worksite, and;
- Have minimal requirements for special equipment.

B. Employee Suitability

Unless mandated by the Director, telework is strictly voluntary. An employee who is suitable for telework is one who has duties and responsibilities that can be, at any given time, conducted from a remote worksite without affecting service quality or organizational operations.

Employees best suited for telework are those who:

- Are fully familiar with their job duties and responsibilities:
- Are independent workers requiring minimal direct supervision;
- Are self-motivated, disciplined, dependable, responsible and trustworthy:
- Are effective communicators and problem-solvers;
- Have limited need for interaction with co-workers and supervisors;
- Have good time-management and organizational skills;
- Are results-oriented;
- Have demonstrated the ability to satisfy performance and productivity standards:
- Have demonstrated the ability to meet goals and objectives;
- Have demonstrated the ability to meet timelines and deadlines, and;
- Are able to provide a safe, secure, dedicated workspace and required technology resources in their home.

C. Notification of Eligibility

GOHSEP will provide a listing of positions eligible for telework through an addendum to this policy.

VII. LIMITATIONS

In implementing this policy, GOHSEP recognizes that certain employees currently enjoy the benefit of flexible work hours and work days. In certain instances, these

Page 5

Issued: April 19, 2010

schedules will not be disturbed. However, to ensure accountability and maximize supervisor-subordinate interactions, GOHSEP's intention is to require employees who telework to be present in-office three days each week. For this reason, the availability of telework may be limited by the employee's work schedule.

For telework-situational, the circumstances requiring telework will dictate the number of authorized days of telework per week. Telework may be limited to one day or extend through the entirety of the workweek.

Telework-formal for employees working the traditional workweek (five 8-hour days) will be limited to two days per week. Supervisors may not authorize both Monday and Friday as an employee's telework days.

For employees authorized to work a flexible work schedule, telework will be authorized as follows:

- (4) 10-hour workday schedule: Two telework days per week. One (1) day of the authorized two (2) days for telework cannot be the day immediately before or after the employee's scheduled day off.
- (4) 9-hour workday and (1) day 4-hour workday schedule: Two telework days per week, one of which will be the 4-hour work day.
- (4) 9-hour workday for the first week schedule, plus (4) 9-hour workday and (1) 8-hour workday for second week schedule:

Two telework days during the 36-hour workweek and two telework days during the 44-hour workweek. Supervisors may not authorize as telework days both the day before and day after the employee's scheduled off-day during the 36-hour workweek.

Once approved, the designated telework days will be identified in a Telework Agreement, which will remain in effect for one year. These days are fixed and not subject to flexibility except as authorized by the immediate supervisor. The designated telework days will not be modified due to a holiday office closure, or required attendance at a business meeting. Limiting flexibility in this regard will ensure in-office coverage and permit supervisors to better manage the telework privilege.

VIII. TELEWORK ARRANGEMENTS

A. Telework-Formal

Formal telework is an on-going work arrangement in which the employee has received approval to work from an alternative worksite. No out-of-state alternative worksites will be allowed.

Page 6

Issued: April 19, 2010

For continuity of operations and other necessary business needs, the Director or his/her designee may restrict telework days for a specific unit or division to "fixed" telework days. (e.g., every Tuesday) or prohibit telework on specific days (e.g., Staff Meeting days).

B. Telework-Situational

Situational telework is a work arrangement in which the employee has received approval from the Director or his/her designee to work from an alternative worksite on a case-by-case basis.

IX. REQUEST FOR TELEWORK

A. Telework-Formal

Employees who desire to participate in a formal telework arrangement must complete the GOHSEP Telework Agreement Form. The employee should carefully review the requirements and limitations of this policy and submit a completed Telework Agreement to their immediate supervisor. In so doing, the employee is required to identify their remote (home) worksite address, cell phone number, proposed work schedule, including the preferred remote work days, and the state equipment required to perform job duties from their home.

The form shall be submitted to the employee's direct supervisor for processing in accordance with the form's instructions. Final approval of the telework agreement rests with the Director or his/her designee.

The immediate supervisor and chain of command shall indicate on the Telework Agreement their recommendation of approval or denial of the telework request. Their signatures serve as certification of their meaningful review of the request in consideration of the requirements and limitations of this policy and overall operational needs of the unit. If a request is denied, a detailed explanation on the Telework Agreement is required.

Upon approval of the GOHSEP Telework Agreement Form, Assistant Deputy Directors and/or the Deputy Director, Chief of Staff shall maintain responsibility for approving requested telework days. Employees shall enter all telework hours via the "ZTEL" time code.

Assistant Deputy Directors and/or the Deputy Director, Chief of Staff may require advance scheduling of telework days to accommodate the needs of the agency. In addition, Assistant Deputy Directors and/or the Deputy Director, Chief of Staff shall ensure that a physical presence is maintained at the primary worksite within each division each workday.

Page 7

Issued: April 19, 2010

Employees will be required to update their GOHSEP Telework Agreement Form during their Performance Planning Session each fiscal year or as needed if other conditions warrant more frequent updates.

During the annual review, supervisors will meet with each teleworking employee to review performance, productivity and accountability. Identified concerns and shortfalls will be discussed, with the supervisor recommending that the Telework Agreement be continued, modified or rescinded. A new Telework Agreement is required to document modifications. A supervisor's recommendation to terminate the telework privilege must be supported by the chain of command in consultation with the Office of Human Resources, and authorized by the Director or his designee before the Telework Agreement can be rescinded.

The executed Telework Agreement (whether approved or denied) will be filed in the Office of Human Resources in the employee's personnel record. Copies of the finalized agreement will be provided to the employee and immediate supervisor. The employee may not begin teleworking until the Telework Agreement is fully completed and filed with the Office of Human Resources.

The foregoing provisions apply primarily to a telework-formal arrangement sought by an employee. For telework-situational, especially those mandated by the Director, a Telework Agreement may not be required. Additionally, a situational telework arrangement related to a job accommodation may not necessitate a formal agreement and, for privacy reasons, such a request may be addressed directly to the Office of Human Resources.

B. Telework-Situational

The Director or his/her designee may authorize an employee to participate in a situational telework arrangement when the needs of the organization or the employee dictate. When an employee has a need for situational telework, they should discuss the need with their supervisor and Assistant Deputy Directors and/or the Deputy Director, Chief of Staff. The Assistant Deputy Directors and/or the Deputy Director, Chief of Staff shall forward all requests for situational telework to the Director or his/her designee for approval.

This type of arrangement requires approval via the GOHSEP Telework Agreement Form, unless the employee already has an existing agreement under a formal telework arrangement. Should the situational telework need exceed 30 days, a new GOHSEP Telework Agreement Form shall be submitted and approved.

Upon approval of the GOHSEP Telework Agreement Form, Assistant Deputy Directors and/or the Deputy Director, Chief of Staff shall maintain responsibility for approving requested telework days.

Page 8

Issued: April 19, 2010

X. PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS AND AVAILABILITY

While working remotely, all business responsibilities, objectives, goals, timelines and deadlines must be satisfied. Work product quality and performance standards for work done remotely remains identical to that expected of in-office workers. The remote workplace must be free of distractions to ensure productivity throughout the workday. Teleworkers may not engage, during scheduled work hours, in personal activities for which leave otherwise would be required.

Telework is not a substitute for child or adult care. Leave must be taken if it becomes necessary for an employee to provide care to another during scheduled work hours.

When working remotely, it is especially important for employees to be available and accessible. This necessarily requires that employees answer and timely return phone calls, and promptly respond to emails, texts, voicemails and instant messages. Additionally, employees are required to provide their cellphone number to their supervisor, and to co-workers and individuals with whom they frequently communicate.

Employees authorized to telework are required to include in their email signature block their office and cell phone numbers and scheduled work hours, and to specify in-office and telework days each week.

XI. HOURS OF WORK

Employee work hours on a daily basis are the same regardless of work location. Work is to begin and end at the designated times, and employees are to be productive throughout the workday except when on break, at lunch or on leave. Work hours are not flexible. Overtime work requires pre-approval, with such approval to be based upon business necessity and a determination that the work cannot be performed during customary work hours.

As with in-office work, employees are entitled to a 15-minute break each morning and afternoon, workload permitting. These should be taken mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Employees may not forego or cumulate breaks to compensate for late arrivals or early departures. The duration and time of the lunch break will be identified in the employee's Telework Agreement. Any deviation from the designated times require notice and supervisory approval. Procedures and processes may be implemented by management to document active work engagement during work hours.

Customary leave requirements apply to remote workers. Any personal activity that causes an employee to be unable to perform job duties, regardless of duration, requires pre-approval and use of leave. Employee in remote status are required to timely enter

Page 9

Issued: April 19, 2010

all leave in LEO and comply with the e-Certification process. Telework days must be tracked via "ZTEL" time code.

Should circumstances beyond control arise which preclude the ability to work from home (loss of electricity, VPN or internet connectivity failure, equipment malfunction, home emergency, etc.), supervisory personnel are to be notified immediately. If the situation cannot be promptly rectified, the employee may be required to report to the primary worksite or take leave, at the supervisor's discretion.

XII. REMOTE WORKSITE

The employee's home is the alternate remote location from which an employee will be authorized to telework. The home address will be listed on the Telework Agreement. Circumstances warranting a change to another remote work location are to be addressed to the immediate supervisor.

The home worksite should be a clean, safe and dedicated workspace that is principally used for the purpose of teleworking. The worksite must be readily accessible and sufficiently spacious to accommodate any equipment, files, work papers, etc. needed to perform assigned duties. The worksite also must be private and secure, with the employee responsible for safeguarding work materials and equipment from unauthorized access, use and damage.

Employees are responsible for any incidental costs associated with telework. GOHSEP will not pay nor reimburse the costs of utilities, telephone or internet services, nor the expenses for installation, repair, technical support or maintenance of personal equipment such as routers, modems, etc.

The remote worksite is considered an extension of the employee's workplace. For this reason, worker's compensation coverage remains in force for an employee while performing official work duties in the designated area of the remote worksite during scheduled duty hours. Work-related injuries or accidents are to be reported to the immediate supervisor and the safety manager immediately upon occurrence.

XIII. USE/SECURITY OF EQUIPMENT

A state-owned computer and peripherals will be provided to employees to perform remote job duties. To ensure cybersecurity and data integrity, employees should be connected to a Virtual Private Network (VPN) while performing work from this device.

The use of state-issued equipment is limited to official GOHSEP business and must comply with security protocols and applicable laws, policies and procedures. Personal use of such equipment is prohibited, including during non-work hours. Additionally, the use of a personal laptop or computer for GOHSEP business purposes is prohibited.

Page 10

Issued: April 19, 2010

GOHSEP is responsible for maintaining and repairing state-issued equipment. If inperson service or support of such equipment is necessary, the employee is responsible for timely bringing the equipment to the primary worksite. Should a delay in the repair or replacement of such equipment occur, the employee may be issued alternate equipment or required to report to work at the primary worksite. On rare occasions, the employee may be required to utilize leave. OTS will not make remote worksite calls for equipment set-up or service.

Employees are reminded that the Office of Technology Services (TS) Help Desk – (225) 219-6900 or (844) 219-6900 is available 24/7 to assist in resolving technical problems with state-issued equipment.

XIV. COMPLIANCE WITH POLICY AND LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Employees who participate in telework shall continue to comply with all GOHSEP policies and procedures, and applicable other Federal and State Laws while working from a remote worksite. This includes but is not limited to, the use of leave, prior approval for overtime, timely reporting of accidents/injuries, timely entry and ecertification of time statements, appropriate use of computer equipment and refraining from prohibited behavior of a sexual, harassing, discriminatory or violent nature.

XV. BUSINESS MEETING

Employees authorized to telework are required to attend all scheduled meetings and business activities related to the performance of their job. For this reason, a supervisor may require an employee to report to the primary worksite (or other work location) on a schedule telework day to attend a meeting or handle pressing business matters. This reporting requirement may be for the entirety or only a portion of the workday. When this occurs, the missed telework hours/day will not be made-up. Additionally, the employee will not be compensated for mileage if required to travel to the primary worksite. However, the employee may be eligible for reimbursement for work-related travel to other work location in accordance with GOHSEP policy and the State Travel Regulations (PPM 49).

Employees unable to meet this requirement may be disciplined and/or placed in an appropriate leave status, including leave without pay (LWOP).

Refusal to report to the primary worksite when directed shall be considered insubordination and subject the employee to disciplinary action and placement in appropriate leave status, including LWOP.

All business meetings are to occur at the primary worksite or other designated work location. Under no circumstance are GOHSEP business meetings to be conducted in the employee's remote worksite.

Page 11

Issued: April 19, 2010

XVI. REQUIRED TELEWORK TRAINING

As a condition of eligibility for telework, the supervisor and employee must complete the following required telework training courses:

- CPTP SCS Teleworking for Employees WBT
- CPTP SCS Managing Teleworkers WBT

XVII. ADDITIONAL TRAINING RESOURCES

As a condition of eligibility for telework, the supervisor may require the employee complete the following additional telework training courses:

- CPTP Developing Others WBT
- CPTP Time Management for Teleworkers WBT
- CPTP Virtual Meeting Etiquette WBT

Training courses can be found in LEO.

XVIII. OFFICIAL OFFICE CLOSURES

Depending on the reason therefor (i.e. weather, road conditions, etc.), an office closure may be declared to a specific building, city/town, parish, region, or the entire state of Louisiana. The official domicile for an employee that teleworks is the city/town or parish where the employee's alternative worksite is located for the days the employee is to perform work at that location. An employee may only have one (1) domicile on any given workday. Thus, if an office closure is declared on a scheduled telework day, the teleworker is:

Not eligible for special office closure leave (LSOC) and must continue working from the alternative worksite when:	Eligible for LSOC leave when:
 The office closure is specific to the primary worksite building. The office closure is specific to a city/town or parish that is different than the city/town or parish which is the employee's designated remote worksite. 	The office closure is specific to a city/town or parish that is the same as the city/town or parish which is the employee's designated remote worksite.

Page 12

Issued: April 19, 2010

XIX. TERMINATION OF TELEWORK

GOHSEP has the right to rescind an employee's telework authorization if the participation fails to benefit the agency. Rescission of the authorization for a position or employee to telework is a business decision and not a disciplinary measure. GOHSEP may terminate Teleworking Agreements at any time, with or without cause, at its convenience, and this decision will be final.

In the event the employee leaves employment with GOHSEP, or is removed from telework for any reason, the employee agrees to return all agency equipment, supplies, and work documents to the GOHSEP Headquarters building within 48 hours or a mutually agreed upon reasonable time period. If the employee fails to return all property, they shall reimburse GOHSEP for all unreturned property.

XX. MISCELLANEOUS

- If an employee's home address changes, they are to immediately update their address in LEO and submit a new Telework Agreement form.
- Under no circumstance will management accept remote work as an excuse for performance deficiencies or low productivity.
- Teleworking employees' emails and work product are subject to review to evaluate work activity and productivity.
- Teleworking employees' attendance, availability and responsiveness are subject to review for accountability purposes.
- For employees authorized to work a flexible work schedule, the workday can begin no earlier than 6:00 a.m. and end no later than 6:00 p.m.
- Employees are required to forward calls from their office phone to their cellphone on telework days.
- When participating in virtual meetings, teleworking employees are to be attentive, fully engaged, and appropriately attired in accordance with GOHSEP Policy HR-0005, Dress Code.
- When teleworking employees are participating in virtual meetings, they are to ensure that the backdrop of the video is appropriate and free of distractions and disruptions.
- Teleworking will not affect and employee's eligibility for job advancement or training opportunities.
- GOHSEP is not responsible nor liable for damage to an employee's home or personal property caused by or during teleworking.

XXI. VIOLATIONS

Violations of the requirements of this policy may result in the telework privilege begin rescinded. Additionally, disciplinary action may be imposed, up to and including dismissal from service.

Page 13

Issued: April 19, 2010

XXII. EXCEPTIONS

Circumstances may warrant exceptions to certain provisions of this policy. Requests for exceptions are to be submitted, with explanation and justification, through the chain of command to the Assistant Deputy Director, or Deputy Director, Chief of Staff for consideration in consultation with the Director.

XXIII. QUESTIONS

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the immediate supervisor.

Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness

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POSITIONS SUITABLE FOR TELEWORK

Unless specifically stated as not eligible for telework below, all full-time positions within the GOHSEP have been designated for telework eligibility.

Due to the nature of job duties, the following positions are **not eligible** for telework:

Position	Organization Unit Text	Position Eligible?
None		
Identified		

Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness Telework Agreement Form

This document is intended to ensure that both the supervisor and the employee have a clear, shared understanding of the employee's telework arrangement. Each telework arrangement is unique depending on the needs of the agency, position, supervisor, and employee.

This Agreement in no way alters my current employment relationship or my obligation to observe all applicable agency rules, policies, and procedures. All existing terms and conditions of employment, including but not limited to my position description, salary, benefits, leave, overtime, etc. remain the same as if I worked at the primary worksite.

Employee Telework Information:

Employee Name:						Personnel #:	
Job Title:						Cell Phone#:	
Section/Division:							
Supervisor:							
Remote Worksite Address:	Enter Street Address Enter City, State Enter Zip Code Enter Parish						
Type of Telework:	☐ Telework-Formal ☐ Telework-Situational Per the GOHSEP <u>GEN-0012 Telework Policy</u> , all situational telework arrangements must receive approval from the Director or his/her designee. Situational telework arrangements do not require an additional amended GOHSEP Telework Agreement Form unless the employee's arrangement will exceed 30 days.						
,							
Telework Schedule Request (In Office/Telework):							
Week 1: Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday		-	Thursday	Friday	
Week 2: Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday		-	Thursday	Friday	
Remote Site Equipment (List State equipment required to perform job below):							
1.				2.			
3.				4.			

Telework Terms and Conditions:

1. All teleworkers are responsible for obtaining reliable phone service and high-speed internet connections. These connections must be maintained for the duration of the

- teleworking agreement.
- 2. All teleworkers shall be connected to the GOHSEP Virtual Private Network (VPN) at all times while performing work from their state-owned laptops at the alternative worksite.
- 3. The amount of time a teleworker is expected to work will not change due to voluntary participation in a telework-formal or telework-situational arrangement. Telework hours are regular work hours and may not be used for personal activities. All teleworkers are expected to remain accessible during designated work hours. Just as with regular work hours, teleworkers are expected to follow the GOHSEP <u>HR-0020</u>, <u>Time</u>, <u>Attendance and Work Hours Policy</u> as it relates to requesting time off. In the event that overtime is anticipated, this must be <u>discussed and approved in advance with the supervisor/manager</u>, just as any overtime scheduling would normally have to be approved.
- 4. All teleworkers will report to the primary worksite, as necessary, upon directive from management.
- 5. All teleworkers shall use the time and attendance system to input telework via the "ZTEL" time code.

Employee Acknowledgment/Approvals:

I agree to abide by the terms and conditions set forth in this GOHSEP Telework Agreement Form and all requirements of the GOHSEP Telework Policy.

I understand that management has the right to amend, terminate or suspend this Agreement at any time.

I understand that failure to comply with the provisions of this Agreement and the GOHSEP Telework Policy may result in termination of the Agreement, and/or other appropriate corrective measures.

I understand that my alternative worksite is an extension of my assigned primary worksite. As such, I am responsible for continuing to comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, and policies regarding my position and my employment at GOHSEP.

I understand that this agreement is not finalized until it is approved by the Director or his/her designee.

Employee Signature	Date
Immediate Supervisor Signature	Date
Section Chief Signature	Date
Director or his/her Designee (DD/COS or ADD) Signature	Date