

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF STANISLAUS
ACTION AGENDA SUMMARY

DEPT: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

BOARD AGENDA # R-17

Urgent Routine

AGENDA DATE October 30, 2001

CEO Concurs with Recommendation YES *ph* NO
(Information Attached)

4/5 Vote Required YES NO

SUBJECT: APPROVAL TO ADOPT AND IMPLEMENT THE STANISLAUS COUNTY
TELECOMMUTE POLICY AND PROCEDURES.

STAFF
RECOMMEN-
DATIONS:

1. ADOPT THE STANISLAUS COUNTY TELECOMMUTE POLICY AND PROCEDURES.
2. DIRECT THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO IMPLEMENT THE TELECOMMUTE PROGRAM.

FISCAL
IMPACT:

The fiscal impact to implement this program is unknown. Departments are expected to absorb any start-up costs in their current budgets. In most cases, telecommuting employees will use existing equipment and resources. In the long term there could be potential cost savings as telecommuting will reduce the need for traditional "brick and mortar" office space, and current facilities can be more efficiently utilized on a shared basis.

BOARD ACTION AS FOLLOWS:

No. 2001-844

On motion of Supervisor Blom, Seconded by Supervisor Simon
and approved by the following vote,

Ayes: Supervisors: Blom, Simon, Caruso, and Chair Paul

Noes: Supervisors: Mayfield

Excused or Absent: Supervisors: None

Abstaining: Supervisor: None

- 1) Approved as recommended
- 2) Denied
- 3) Approved as amended

MOTION:

AMENDED ITEM TO DIRECTED THE CEO TO IMPLEMENT A PILOT
PROGRAM FOR THREE COUNTY DEPARTMENTS FOR A TELECOMMUTE
PROGRAM AND BRING BACK A REPORT TO THE BOARD

Christine Ferraro

ATTEST: CHRISTINE FERRARO TALLMAN, Clerk

By: Deputy

File No.

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DISCUSSION:

WHY

With Central Valley employers seeking innovative ways to maintain their competitive edge, to recruit and retain key individuals and to enhance the quality of life for all of their employees, solutions such as Telecommuting take on a strategic role. Telecommuting is a concept that directly supports service delivery, the creation of an electronic community with enhanced economic competitiveness and quality of life. The workplace is changing, making it more feasible to implement telecommuting. Telecommuting stimulates employee productivity while giving workers more flexibility and control over their lives.

The use of a telecommute arrangement can assist management and employees in economically and effectively accomplishing the mission of the County in the following ways:

- Enable County staff to be where their customers are;
- Improve program effectiveness and employee productivity and morale;
- Facilitate optimum utilization of County office and parking facilities;
- Reduce absenteeism;
- Promote employee health and wellness;
- Improve employee recruitment and retention;
- Improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion;
- Effectively continue business as part of a disaster recovery or emergency plan.

WHAT

This policy defines telecommuting as the partial or total substitution of telecommunications technology for the trip to and from the primary workplace, along with the associated changes in policy, organization, management, and work structure. Simply put, it is moving the work to where the workers live, instead of moving the workers to work. Computers, cellular phones, fax machines, e-mail and the Internet have removed the physical barriers that once required workers to be in their offices.

The program described in these guidelines, policy and procedures has evolved over the past several months and reflects real life experiences from

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both public and private industry. This specific policy is modeled after the State of California Telecommute Policy and programs from several Silicon Valley companies.

An article released by the Conference Board in December 1998 found that more than 80% of companies have policies that allow employees to telecommute. However, it was found that only 6% of those employees do so because of job requirements that require them to be on-site. There was also a concern mentioned that supervisors preferred employees to remain on-site where they could be supervised. A more recent survey conducted by International Telework Association & Council in 2000 found that teleworking fosters increased productivity. While the productivity changes were not verified with supervisors in this survey, self-reported productivity improvements of employees was an average of 15%. Teleworkers indicated that telework is important to them not only as a criterion for starting in their current job but also as a prerequisite for a new job. CEO's that were surveyed indicated that there were many reasons why they even considered telework. "The most popular reasons are space savings, productivity improvements, and personnel retention and/or recruiting. In these days of low unemployment and high demand for skilled workers, personnel retention or recruiting often rises to the top of the wish list".

On September 30, 1997 your Board approved a pilot telecommuting project with a grant from the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District. The goal of that program was to improve customer service and information access, while reducing motor vehicle emissions for Stanislaus County. The Department of Environmental Resources worked cooperatively with Management Information Services to implement the telecommuting pilot project. Eight pilot telecommuters were selected from throughout the County. These 8 individuals have been telecommuting on average of 1-2 days per week for the past 3 years. Unfortunately we neglected to further track the pilot and actual data was not maintained during the course of the pilot program.

A recent survey of the pilot telecommuters shows they have saved a combined 454 miles per week. According to the original project estimates this small group has already reduced CO₂ vehicle emission by 15.42 pounds through telecommuting the past 3 years. In addition the pilot telecommuters have enjoyed other savings including unexpected childcare expenses for taking care of ill children, sky rocketing gasoline costs, outside lunch purchases, and clothing and dry cleaning costs.

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This group resoundingly endorsed telecommuting in terms of work efficiency and productivity. The intangible benefits include uninterrupted work time to focus on critical projects. They were also able to work flexible hours and eliminated night or weekend trips to the office to retrieve computerized files. The only suggestion for improvement identified was to have consistent, off-hours, technical support available from Management Information Services via cell phone or pager.

The focus of the County's proposed telecommute program is to ensure quality service delivery. Participation in the County telecommute program should be based on the ability of the employee to perform tasks that can be completed from remote locations, such as a home office or the field, and the manager's assessment of the employee's ability to complete those tasks satisfactorily.

HOW

Stanislaus County shall encourage the use of telecommuting where it is a viable work option with clearly defined advantages for both the County and the employee. These advantages would include increased employee satisfaction and productivity. The County recognizes the benefit of such work options for employees when both program and employee personal needs can be addressed. This would be a real paradigm shift from the traditional "brick and mortar" office space to telecommuting.

A study done by San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District found that: "The exact nature of the social effects of widespread telecommuting are not well understood because telecommuting is a recent phenomenon. However, it is believed that telecommuting may yield benefits in terms of increased employee effectiveness and productivity, higher morale and job satisfaction, decreased absenteeism and sick time, and decreased overhead costs (since less office space may be needed). Utilization of more advanced technology can stimulate economic growth and contribute to productivity throughout the economy. Increased telecommuting is likely to reinforce trends toward the dispersal of economic activities and population, and may raise important issues concerning disparities between workers with the option of telecommuting and those for whom telecommuting is not feasible."

All department heads, managers, supervisors and telecommuters are expected to familiarize themselves and comply with the Stanislaus County

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Telecommute Policy and Procedures. The policy and procedures outlines the agreement and responsibilities of the department and employee. Regular employees are eligible for participation in the telecommute program.

There is no indication that any of the unions would have any concerns with employees telecommuting. Telecommute time is actual work time and applicable policies and MOU would apply. Departments would still be responsible for monitoring employee's overtime.

WHAT CAN THIS BECOME IN THE FUTURE

Many California companies are implementing telecommuting or have implemented programs for their employees and are already reaping the benefits in productivity, morale and efficiency.

In addition, service delivery could be improved by allowing employees to work in the field rather than an office space. For example, Building Inspectors could log into the computer from their vehicles in the morning and start their assigned inspection routes immediately. This would eliminate the need to report to the office each day for 1-2 hours to receive inspection routes.

Telecommuting also helps the environment by reducing air pollution, congestion on roadways and fuel consumption. State of California statistics include:

- Californians spent 300,000 hours daily sitting in traffic in 1997.
- If 10 percent of the workforce in this state telecommuted once per week, more than 1.2 million gallons of fuel would be saved, that equates to 12,963 tons less air pollution. If 10 percent of Stanislaus County employees telecommute once per week, more than 303 gallons of fuel would be saved which would mean less air pollution of 3.27 tons.
- The number of US telecommuters has grown to almost 12 million in 1997, 17 percent of all telecommuters live in California.

POLICY ISSUE:

This telecommuting program directly relates to the Board Priority to promote efficient government operations and to deliver excellent community service by allowing mobility of the workforce in the field and increased worker productivity. In the state of the County speech on January 23, 2001 Supervisor Paul mentioned the benefits of the program in that it will improve

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productivity, reduce air pollution, support field operations, and reduce the need for more office space. The benefits mentioned for employees were that it would help with unexpected childcare issues due to illness and health issues that contribute to absenteeism. These are in line with the findings of the pilot project.

STAFFING
IMPACT:

There is no staffing impact associated with this recommendation.

**STANISLAUS COUNTY
TELECOMMUTE POLICY AND PROCEDURES
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TELECOMMUTE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

It is the policy of Stanislaus County (County) to encourage the use of telecommuting where it is a viable work option with clearly defined advantages for both the County and the employee. The County recognizes the benefit of such work options for employees when both program and employee personal needs can be addressed.

Managers and employees must understand that participation in the telecommute program is a privilege, not a right. Adherence to the policy and procedures are an essential requirement of the telecommute program. The policy and procedures will be reviewed initially at six (6) months and at least annually thereafter to improve the program.

Responsibilities

All department heads, managers, supervisors and telecommuters are expected to familiarize themselves and comply with the County policy and procedures. More detailed descriptions of responsibilities are provided in the "Considerations" and "Procedures and Guidelines" sections, below.

Eligibility

Regular, non-probationary, employees are eligible for participation in the telecommute program. Extra-help or trainee employees and Personal Services Contractors will not normally be approved to participate in the telecommute program on a regular, ongoing basis. Individual exceptions may apply. There are some positions that, due to the nature of the work, are not suited for telecommuting. Examples include front counter reception, direct customer contact for service delivery, and emergency operations.

The department head has final approval on whether a position and/or person is eligible for telecommuting. The department head may rescind the approval at any time if it is in the best interest of the department.

Participation Approval

Participation in the telecommute program is voluntary and subject to the prior written approval by both an employee's immediate supervisor and department head or designee. The final decision will rest with the department head or designee. Approval must be completed prior to the start of the employee's telecommute schedule by execution of a Telecommute Agreement to include a Safety Checklist and Supervisor's Checklist. The department will forward the completed Telecommute Agreement and Checklists to Chief Executive Office-Personnel to be placed in the employee's official personnel file.

Renewal of Telecommute Understanding

The Telecommute Agreement must be discussed and renewed initially at six (6) months and at least annually thereafter with each employee.

Termination of Telecommute Participation

The employee may discontinue participation in the telecommute program at any time, for any reason, upon written or verbal notice to their supervisor. Management may terminate an individual employee's participation at any time:

- For any reason;
- This is a non-grievable action.

BACKGROUND

Authority

County Code Section 3.32.060 authorizes every department head to incorporate work hours to meet the business needs of the department. Authority to establish a telecommuting program within the County is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer.

Definitions

Telecommuting is defined as periodic work away from the main office, either at home, from the field, or in a telecommute center. More formally, it is the partial substitution of computers or telecommunications technologies, or both, for the commute to work. It is usually an off-site arrangement that permits employees to work in or near their homes, near clients' offices, from a vehicle or at project sites for all or part of a workweek. "Telecommute" is an umbrella concept encompassing the terms telecommuting, teleconferencing, and videoconferencing.

Benefits

The use of a telecommute arrangement can assist management and employees in economically and effectively accomplishing the mission of the County in the following ways:

- Enable County staff to be where their customers are and better serve their customers;
- Improve department effectiveness and employee productivity and morale;
- Facilitate optimum utilization of County office and parking facilities;
- Reduce absenteeism;
- Promote employee health and wellness;
- Improve employee recruitment and retention;
- Improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion;
- Effectively continue business as part of a disaster recovery or emergency plan.

CONSIDERATIONS

Considerations for Telecommute Participation

In many of the County's job assignments, access to the computer network or a remote computer is essential for obtaining work-related information, processing work and communicating. The effectiveness of performing work at a remote location, such as a home office, may be greatly diminished if an employee does not have access to the computer network. However, under specific situations of a temporary duration, such as providing reasonable accommodation for permanently disabled and displaced employees, management may allow an employee to telecommute periodically when they do not have access to a computer or the computer system. Participation in the County telecommute program should be based on the ability of the employee to perform tasks that can be completed from remote locations, such as a home office or the field and the manager's assessment of the employee's ability to complete those tasks satisfactorily. Consideration, on a case-by-case basis, should be given to the following:

Job Knowledge

- Does the employee have the necessary knowledge to perform the required job tasks at home with minimal supervision?

- Does the employee demonstrate the necessary computer expertise to perform his/her job at home?

Employee Characteristics

- Does the employee have a history of reliability and responsibility in completing work assignments?
- Is the employee motivated and self-directed?
- Does the employee demonstrate an ability to establish work priorities and effectively manage his/her time?
- Is the employee a permanent, non-probationary employee without a record of discipline?

Task Scheduling

- Does the individual already work alone handling information and tasks such as thinking, planning, coordinating, writing, reading, analysis, teleconferencing, computer programming, word processing or data entry?
- Can tasks which can be completed away from the office be grouped and scheduled for telecommute days?
- Can the outcome of the work be objectively measured and assessed?
- Can staff meetings and conferences be grouped and scheduled for non-telecommute days or accommodated through other means (e.g., teleconferencing)?
- Is there a sufficient workload to justify a full day's absence from the office?

Public/Department Contacts

- What portion of the job is devoted to face-to-face contact with other agencies, the public or internal staff?
- Can this contact be structured to allow for communication via phone or computer, or grouped into non-telecommute days, or can alternatives be established to provide this contact on telecommute days?

Reference Materials

- What portion of the job requires the use of reference materials or resources located in the designated work site?
- Can these resources be easily taken home for a day or two without interfering with co-workers' job performance or compromising safety and confidentiality of files, documents and computer programs?
- Are these resources available through other means such as a computer accessible library service?

Use of Computers

- Will response time on computer equipment used at home be fast enough to allow for *required productivity*?
- If network access is needed, does the correct "dial-up" capability exist?
- If long-distance "dial-up" is necessary, is the cost prohibitive?
- If connection to a Local Area Network (LAN) at the work place is required, are the necessary hardware components in place?
- Has the employee completed training for and demonstrated an adequate level of skill in use *of the computer and software that will be used for telecommuting*?
- Is the employee willing to absorb any additional costs associated with telecommuting including utility and phones?

Special Equipment

- What portion of the job relies upon access to photocopiers, fax capabilities or other specialized equipment?
- Can access be managed to allow telecommuter's needs to be met on non-telecommute days or can these needs be satisfied at a facility near the employee's telecommute office?

Information Security

- What portion of the job uses secured or otherwise confidential information?
- Can the integrity of that information be secured in accordance with information security policies if it is taken or accessed from off site?

Travel

- Does the job involve fieldwork?
- Can trips begin or end at the employee's off site office rather than at the main office?

RESPONSIBILITIES

Department Heads

1. Administer the telecommute program in their respective departments;
2. Ensure compliance with all applicable policies and procedures;
3. Identify positions suitable for the telecommute option; and
4. Determine whether the department should provide equipment and software on a case by case basis.

Managers and Supervisors

1. Determine if proposals for their employees to telecommute are likely to contribute to the County's objectives, while maintaining or improving program efficiency, productivity, service, benefits, and safety conditions;
2. Ensure that employees who remain in the office are not burdened by being required to handle the telecommuter's regular assignments (i.e., answering telephone calls, dispensing information, etc.);
3. *As for all other employees, provide specific, measurable, and attainable performance expectations for the telecommuter; define in detail, assignments, corresponding deadlines, and the quality of work expected. Measurement of productivity can only be done by pre-defining measurable outputs and outcomes;*
4. Provide resources for employee training in use of equipment and software as required for the employee to function effectively and independently;
5. Inform employees that failure to comply with policy and procedures may be cause for terminating participation in the telecommute program and/or possible disciplinary action;
6. Ensure employees do not breach information security. Notify and follow-up with Management Information Services if any breach should occur;
7. Maintain copies of the employee's Safety Checklist, the Supervisor's Checklist, and Telecommute Agreement;

8. Establish clearly defined time reporting procedures in compliance with County policy and ensure overtime work, if necessary, is approved in advance;
9. Periodically check with the telecommuter to ensure the employee is working as scheduled; and
10. Obtain department head or designee approval.

Telecommuters

1. When telecommuting is determined to be a viable work option, work with their supervisor to develop an acceptable Telecommute Agreement;
2. Abide by the provisions set forth in the County's Telecommute Policies and Procedures document;
3. Adhere to all applicable laws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures regarding information security as outlined below in "Information Security;"
4. Acquire the skills necessary to meet department requirements and operate independently from a telecommute site, at employee expense;
5. Establish and maintain an acceptable and safe home office environment as outlined in "Work Environment Criteria" and "Setting Up a Home Office."
6. Complete the "Safety Checklist" and certify to its accuracy annually when the Telecommute Agreement is renewed;
7. Establish, operate and maintain the home office, equipment, devices, and services associated with the telecommute arrangement at employee expense;
8. Repair and/or replace any county-owned equipment that is damaged, lost, or stolen due to gross negligence; and
9. Comply with tax laws. (County is not responsible for substantiating a telecommuter's claim of tax deductions for operation of a home office used to perform County work. Employees should seek advice from a tax advisor concerning home office deductions.)
10. Allow access to telecommuting location to County staff to ensure proper safety, security and confidentiality are maintained.

Chief Executive Office

1. Assist County employees and management in understanding the County's Telecommute Policy and Procedures; and
2. Maintain and update County's Telecommute Policy and Procedures as needed.

Management Information Services

1. Assist with County-purchased software or hardware installation for the telecommute option to ensure that it is in accordance with software copyright laws and compatible with County software standards;
2. Provide general oversight regarding appropriate equipment and other information and computer needs associated with telecommute; and
3. Provide guidelines defining the appropriate data communications equipment, software and services for home-based telecommute.

Risk Management

1. Provide oversight and policy guidance on all insurance related matters including equipment and worker's compensation issues; and
2. Provide information and guidance in defining the appropriate ergonomic set-up of home-based telecommute space.

PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

Regular Schedule

"Regular telecommute" means an established schedule of hours per day for each day per week or month. A regular telecommute schedule must be established prior to the start of the work arrangement and must be mutually agreed to by the employee and the supervisor. Any change in the agreed upon schedule must be approved by the supervisor, documented and appended to the Telecommute Agreement. The supervisor and the telecommuter must take actions to prevent the telecommuter from becoming isolated from office staff. Schedule changes are to be approved by the appropriate department management.

An employee must forgo the telecommute schedule and report to the office when required on a regularly scheduled telecommute day. The employee may be called in to the office when necessary to meet operational needs. The manager or supervisor should provide reasonable notice whenever possible. However, the employee may be required to report to the office without advance notice, as needed. Employees on a telecommute schedule are required to notify their department immediately if they will be absent due to illness.

Full-time telecommute is permissible only when necessary and justified (e.g., to accommodate medical restrictions or disabilities) and depends on the needs of the job and demonstration of a clear benefit to program objectives and operations.

Communication

While working away from the office, employees must be accessible for communication via a second telephone line, cell phone, pager, regularly checking voice mail, or regularly checking e-mail. Supervisors are encouraged to allow for flexibility in the means for accessing a telecommuter.

Temporary Schedule

Employees may be allowed to telecommute on a temporary basis as their duty assignment permits. If the request is of a medical nature, written documentation approving the telecommute arrangement must be provided by a doctor or other licensed practitioner. Circumstances which may be appropriate for "temporary" telecommute include, but are not limited to:

- Special project work which requires a period of uninterrupted time;
- During convalescence from injury or illness;
- While a family member is recovering and needs in-home assistance;
- During the last few weeks of pregnancy, and/or following the birth of a child;
- While all reasonable commute routes are blocked (i.e., major construction, storm, or disaster);
- Primary work site is inaccessible or uninhabitable.

Hours of Work and Overtime

All work schedules require department head approval. An alternate work schedule (e.g., 9/8/80, 4/10/40, flextime, etc.) may be approved for an individual telecommuter as long as the work schedule is consistent with management needs and the requirements of the employee's work group week. An employee may be permitted to telecommute for part of a day to avoid peak commute periods. Travel time from home to office is not considered work time. For any work schedule, the supervisor must be able to confirm whether the employee is working. Changes in work schedules or temporary telecommute assignments may be made at a department head's discretion to meet management needs or to accommodate an employee's request (e.g., convalescence, parental leave, etc.)

Telecommute is intended to provide flexibility in work schedules thus reducing the need for overtime. Overtime is generally discouraged but if necessary, overtime and call back must be authorized in advance by management. Department heads in accordance with County policy will authorize overtime compensation and compensatory time off.

Equipment, Software, Services, Maintenance, Repair, and Replacement

County will not, as standard practice, purchase computers, software, software licenses, Internet or phone services or office equipment such as printers, fax machines, calculators, or furniture for in-home telecommute. Purchase of such items, as well as consumable supplies, must be at the direction of a department head, and must be in compliance with County budget, purchasing and management information services policies.

Software may in some instances be provided, when the department head approves purchase of the necessary licenses. Virus protection software must be maintained on the same updated version as the County's.

In addition, the selection, installation, maintenance, repair or replacement of employee-owned equipment and software is the responsibility of the employee. Computer equipment should have a configuration that is compatible with County's Information Technology (IT) infrastructure.

In the event any County equipment is stolen, needs replacement, repair or maintenance; County will be responsible for its replacement, repair or maintenance if the telecommuter has provided the proper care and safety of the equipment. If County-owned equipment or property is stolen it is the responsibility of the telecommuter to obtain a police report and provide a copy to the department. If a telecommuter is moving to a new residence and has an existing business telephone line owned by County, County Telecommunications must be notified of the move prior to the telecommuter vacating the residence, to ensure the telephone line is disconnected on a timely basis.

In the event of equipment malfunction, the telecommuter must notify his/her supervisor immediately. If repairs will take some time, the telecommuter may be asked to report to the main office until the equipment is operational.

Upon termination of this agreement, or employment with the County, all County owned equipment must be returned to the County within five (5) business days.

Equipment Utilization

Unless there are extreme mitigating circumstances, the department will not provide equipment and software when a similarly equipped workstation is maintained at the office for the employee seeking a telecommute option. Provision of equipment for a telecommuter will normally be an exceptional situation in which the department head determines a clear benefit to the program or the employee has special needs. For regular telecommuting, consideration should be given to

combining the work and home telecommuting environments, which may be accomplished through a low cost laptop.

County-owned equipment and services are to be used only for County business.

Work Environment Criteria

The opportunity to participate in a home telecommute program is offered with the understanding that it is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that a proper work environment is maintained as follows:

- Designate an area that allows for working in an office setting which can be secured to protect County equipment and materials;
- Ensure that the equipment necessary to perform the work is in the designated area;
- Make advance arrangements for dependent care to ensure a productive work environment (telecommute is not intended to be a substitute for regular day care or other personal obligations);
- Keep personal disruptions such as non-business telephone calls and visitors to a minimum;
- Obtain pre-approval from the supervisor for use of vacation time or sick leave to attend to family or home matters during home office hours; and
- Ensure that the home office is a safe place to work (see "Setting Up A Home Office," below.)

Information Security

Security of confidential information is of primary concern and importance to the County.

Telecommuters, like all County employees, are expected to adhere to all applicable laws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures regarding information security. Following are basic information security guidelines:

- Use County information assets only for authorized purposes, and ensure that confidential information is not disclosed or is readily available to any unauthorized person;
- Back up critical information on a regular basis to ensure the information can be recovered if the primary source is damaged or destroyed;
- Use "logon" passwords on all systems containing confidential information and keep those passwords secure;
- Use the latest virus protection software on telecommute systems used to prepare information for subsequent use on County systems;
- Return material (paper documents, files, diskettes, etc.) containing all confidential information to County for proper handling or disposal, if necessary;
- Adhere to copyright law by not copying or sharing any County owned software utilized by telecommuters, and when no longer employed by County, remove all such software from the home computer and return any software media to County; and
- Immediately report any security lapse to the employee's supervisor.

Health and Safety

Failure to maintain a proper and safe work environment, in accordance with this policy, will result in terminating an employee from the telecommute program and may include discipline.

If an employee incurs a work-related injury while telecommuting, workers' compensation laws and rules apply just as they would if such an injury occurred at the main office. Employees must

notify their supervisors immediately and complete all necessary documents regarding the injury as required by County Risk Management.

Setting Up a Home Office

It is important for all employees to maintain a healthy, safe and ergonomically sound work environment while working in the office or at a remote location. The major difference between the employer's office and the home office is ownership and control over the workplace.

A "Safety Checklist" must be completed by the potential telecommuter prior to the beginning of home telecommuting and all items must be reviewed and evaluated as being satisfactory by the employee's supervisor or appropriate County personnel.

Protecting Data and Equipment

The following computer safeguards can prevent costly computer breakdowns and the loss of crucial data:

1. Maintain virus protection software on the same updated release version used by the County;
2. Position equipment away from direct sunlight or heat;
3. Place equipment on well-ventilated surfaces;
4. Dust the office space regularly;
5. Do not eat or drink near data or equipment;
6. Do not touch unprotected floppy diskette or CD-ROM surfaces or place heavy objects on diskettes;
7. Keep diskettes and CD-ROMs away from heat, dirt, smoke and moisture; and
8. Keep all magnets, magnetic paper clip holders, fluorescent lamps and electric motors away from computer equipment and floppy diskettes.

Fire Protection

The following fire safety equipment can help to protect the employee and equipment in the event of a fire.

1. **Smoke Detectors** - The Health and Safety Code, Sections 13113.7 and 13113.8 require that dwellings be provided with smoke detectors. Employees are responsible for assuring home compliance with these requirements. Smoke detectors placed in the home work area must meet the following criteria:
 - a. Must be placed in a location which monitors the work area and any electronic equipment used to support telecommuting;
 - b. Must be approved by Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) and/or County Fire Marshal, and have a functional test mechanism; and
 - c. Should be tested at the time of installation and on a monthly basis. Detectors which are wired into the household electrical system and have a battery backup should be checked with main power both on and off. Battery operated detectors should be cleaned and equipped with fresh batteries as recommended by the manufacturer.
2. **Fire Extinguishers** - The designated work area must be equipped with a UL approved fire extinguisher. Employees are responsible for assuring home compliance with this requirement. The fully charged extinguisher should be made easily and readily accessible near the work area (no more than ten (10) feet from electronic telecommuting equipment).

CHECKLISTS AND AGREEMENT

These procedures are to be followed prior to the start of a telecommute schedule:

1. The department head establishes which positions may be acceptable for telecommuting and under what circumstances;
2. The employee submits a verbal or written request to his/her immediate supervisor, who should discuss the proposal with his/her department head. If the proposal is viewed as having potential for approval, the following steps should be followed;
3. The employee is given a copy of the telecommute policy and procedures and signs the required forms indicating that he/she has read, understands and will abide by the requirements.
4. A "Safety Checklist" is completed, signed and dated by the employee and submitted to the employee's supervisor;
5. The employee attends the required safety training on office safety ergonomics (scheduled through Risk Management);
6. The supervisor confirms that the employee has studied the Safety Checklist and completed the required office safety ergonomics training, and reviews the ergonomic checklist for any problems that need to be corrected before the employee is allowed to start the program;
7. The supervisor approves or denies the Safety Checklist and returns it to the employee;
8. The supervisor completes the Supervisor's Checklist. The employee and supervisor sign and date the bottom of the form. The supervisor retains the signed form; and
9. The supervisor and the employee complete a Telecommute Agreement. The Agreement is signed and dated by the telecommuter, supervisor and department head, with the department head having final decision making responsibility for approval of the Telecommute Agreement. The department head forwards the approved form to Chief Executive Office-Personnel.

SAFETY CHECKLIST

The following checklist **must** be completed prior to the beginning of home telecommuting.

<input type="checkbox"/> Smoke Alarm/Detector (UL Approved)
<input type="checkbox"/> Fire Extinguisher (UL Approved)
<input type="checkbox"/> Easy access to fire extinguisher
<input type="checkbox"/> Employee has attended required "Office Safety Ergonomics" class scheduled through Risk Management.
<input type="checkbox"/> Employee "Do It Yourself" Ergonomic Checklist Completed (attached)
<input type="checkbox"/> Uncluttered work environment

Home office safety re-certification will be required on an annual basis.

I certify that my home office meets all the above requirements.

Employee: _____

Signature and Date:

Supervisor: _____ Approved Denied

Signature and Date:

Employee "Do-It-Yourself" Ergonomics Checklist for Work Or At Home

This "Do-It-Yourself" Ergonomics Checklist" was designed by the Joyce Institute to help you make adjustments to your work area that will enhance your comfort when you are using a computer. In the first column, please indicate those changes that you intend to make. In the second column, indicate those changes that you have made. This form is required for participation in a telecommute work arrangement.

The following checklist **must** be completed prior to the beginning of home telecommuting.

	Changes to Make	Changes Made
Lighting and Glare		
Monitor placed perpendicular to window.		
Drapes/blinds adjusted when necessary.		
Monitor height and tilt adjusted to avoid glare.		
Monitor placed on a surface that is not under a cabinet with a light.		
Task lighting adjusted away from screen and away from the eyes.		
Sources of reflected glare removed (white paper, etc.).		
A screen hood or shield placed, if other changes are not successful in reducing glare.		
Screen Controls		
Brightness and contrast controls adjusted.		
Focus controls adjusted.		
Screen cleaned frequently with appropriate cleaner.		
Arrangement of Equipment/Material		
Top of screen at eye level or lower (10 to 20 degrees); may vary for bifocal wearer (keep low).		
Screen placed 18" to 24" away from the eyes.		
Documents placed on document holder or raised in some way.		
Document holder placed at same height and next to screen.		
Document and screen placed to capitalize on the dominant eye.		
Rest Pauses/Exercise		
Rest pauses taken frequently throughout the day.		
Eyes refreshed through yawning, blinking, seeing natural light.		
Eye exercises performed frequently (palming, relaxation, focus change).		
Eye Exam		
Eye examination scheduled, if needed.		
Discomfort Reported		
Discomfort (if any) reported.		

	Changes to Make	Changes Made
Work Surface and Input Devices		
Work surface and keyboard height adjusted to keep the wrist flat, while the elbow is at a 70 to 135 degree angle.		
Keyboard adjusted so that hands are aligned with wrists (not twisted out or in).		
Keyboard adjusted so that the forearm is not resting on a sharp edge.		
The mouse, if any, positioned next to the keyboard at the same height to minimize the reach and distance.		
Palm support is appropriate, and should only be used when an employee is not actually keying.		

	Changes to Make	Changes Made
Chair		
Chair height adjusted so the arms are comfortably at the side of the body.		
Footrest (or something that works as a footrest) is in use, if needed, to support feet.		
Backrest adjusted for lumbar support (either the chair is adjusted or a pillow is placed).		
Armrests, if any, adjusted for comfort to support the forearm.		

	Changes to Make	Changes Made
Work Habits		
Chair positions and posture changed frequently.		
The force used to hit the keys or move the mouse minimized.		
Regular alternation among the tasks in the job.		

	Changes to Make	Changes Made
Rest Pauses/Exercise		
Rest pauses from 30 seconds to five minutes taken every hour.		
Relaxation exercises performed frequently (deep breathing, cable stretch, shoulder shrug, executive stretch, foot rotations, hand shake, hand/finger massage, finger squeeze).		

	Changes to Make	Changes Made
Lifestyle Changes		
Consideration given to lifestyle changes (eating healthful foods, etc.).		

	Changes to Make	Changes Made
Discomforts Reported		
Discomforts, if any, reported to the supervisor		

Employee:

Signature and Date: _____

Supervisor:

Signature and Date: _____

SUPERVISOR'S CHECKLIST

The following checklist **must** be completed prior to the beginning of home telecommuting.

- Employee and supervisor have read, understood, signed and agree to abide by the provisions of the County Telecommute Policy and Procedures and any departmental requirements;
- Performance expectations have been discussed and are clearly understood;
- Appropriate training has been completed, and skill levels have been evaluated;
- The employee is familiar with requirements pertaining to the security and confidentiality of data, software, files and information;
- The employee has certified that the home work space and workstation meet the safety standards as outlined on the safety checklist and ergonomic evaluation;
- Procedures have been clearly defined for contacting the telecommuter by phone if necessary; and
- If County-owned equipment and/or services are provided, the requirements for care of equipment and/or use of service have been discussed and are clearly understood.

Employee:

Signature and Date:

Supervisor:

Signature and Date:

TELECOMMUTE AGREEMENT

Name of Telecommuter: _____

Residence Address: _____

Residence Phone: () _____ Pager Number: _____

Department: _____

Understanding

The department head, supervisor and the telecommuter have read and understand the County Telecommute Policy and Procedures. All parties understand that the Telecommute Agreement must be reviewed and renewed at least annually to ensure the standards for participation are being followed and that it may be terminated by the department head or the telecommuter as indicated in this policy, associated procedures, and any departmental requirements.

The supervisor and the telecommuter have read, understand, completed, and signed the "Supervisor's Checklist," prior to participation in the telecommute program and further agree to the following:

Telecommute Schedule

It is understood that telecommute hours and days must be scheduled in advance and approved by the supervisor. At certain times, it may be necessary for the telecommute schedule to be revised to ensure critical deadlines are met, to attend meetings, or to attend training sessions. Any change by the telecommuter in the agreed upon schedule must be pre-approved, and when permanent, documented and appended to the Telecommute Agreement.

The following telecommute schedule is being established:

<input type="checkbox"/> Regular	<input type="checkbox"/> Casual	<input type="checkbox"/> Full-time
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Date of first scheduled telecommute day:

Telecommute days and hours will typically be:

Telecommuter will be available for communication on telecommute days during the hours of:

_____ a.m./p.m. to _____ a.m./p.m.

TELECOMMUTE AGREEMENT (continued)

Information Security

The telecommuter will provide necessary security for both electronic and paper information and shall ensure that no unauthorized person uses information.

Work Effectiveness and Safety

The telecommuter agrees to:

- Master computer hardware and software skills necessary to perform the assigned telecommute duties prior to requesting to telecommute;
- Learn and apply ergonomic safety practices;
- Establish and maintain a safe and secure home office environment;
- Ensure customer needs take precedence over the home office schedule;
- Proactively stay in touch with the supervisor and customers;
- Ensure that work takes precedence over family and home matters during home office hours;
- Make arrangements for dependent care, if applicable; and
- Produce electronic work products that are usable in County's information system with no additional work.

Voluntary Participation

Employee voluntarily agrees to work at the approved alternate workplace indicated above and to follow all applicable County and departmental policies and procedures while working at the alternate workplace.

Salary and Benefits

Employee agrees that the telecommuting agreement/arrangement is not a basis for changing the employee's salary or benefits.

Official Duties

Unless otherwise instructed, employee agrees to perform only official duties at the alternate workplace. Employee agrees not to conduct personal business while in official duty status at the alternate workplace, for example, caring for dependents or making home repairs.

Leave

Employee agrees to follow established County procedures for requesting and obtaining approval of leave.

Overtime

Employee agrees to work only the approved telecommuting days and hours, which are approved in advance by the department. Any overtime required must be approved in advance by the employee's supervisor. Employee understands that working overtime without such approval is grounds for terminating the telecommuting privilege and/or other appropriate disciplinary action.

TELECOMMUTE AGREEMENT (continued)

Equipment/Supplies

Employee agrees to secure any County or departmental owned equipment and materials, and to use the same only for official purposes. Upon termination of this agreement, or employment with the County, the employee agrees to return all County owned equipment to the County within five (5) business days.

Liability

The employee understands and agrees that the County or the department will not be liable for damages to an employee's personal or real property while the employee is working at the alternate workplace, except to the extent the County or department is held liable by the California Tort Claims Act or Workers' Compensation laws.

Alternate Workplace Costs

The employee understands that the County or the Department will not be responsible for any operating costs that are associated with the employee using his or her home as the alternate workplace, for example, home maintenance, insurance, or utilities.

Workers' Compensation

Employee understands that he or she is covered under the California Workers' Compensation Act if injured in the course and scope of actually performing official duties at the alternate workplace. The employee agrees to notify the supervisor immediately of any accident or injury that occurs at the alternate workplace and to complete any forms as required by Risk Management.

I have read and understand the County Telecommute Policy and Procedures and agree to adhere to the requirements of the telecommute work option set forth in this Agreement.

Employee: _____

Signature and Date:

Supervisor: _____ Approved Denied

Signature and Date:

Department Head: _____ Approved Denied

Signature and Date:
