

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****February 1, 2022**

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SUBJECT: DISCUSSION OF EMPLOYEE WORK-FROM-HOME POLICIES

As a protection for the City of Fort Worth's workforce and our community against the spread of COVID and the permutations of the virus, both the City Manager's Office and Human Resources Department have consistently promoted the use of Remote Work/Working from Home since the onset of the pandemic. As the City faces the current surge, departments are being challenged once again to review and reassess the flexibility of the policy, which is fully available to them, in order to mitigate the internal spread of the virus.

The City's Personnel Rules and Regulations, provide guidance for departments on provisions for successful work from home assignments. The policy is managed by each Department Head and their management teams to determine how best to implement remote work activities. As long as the department's positions do not require employees to work in the field or directly with the public, and productivity levels can be maintained, Department Heads have been encouraged to be as flexible and creative as possible for their employees.

The guidance is to assist our employees who find themselves in various situations caused by the pandemic, including for employees that have tested positive, employees that have been exposed to someone who has tested positive, those that have a family member that necessitates their assistance due to exposure, as well as the impact based on external conditions in our community, e.g., school closures, elderly care facility closures, etc.

Any remote work policy comes with additional challenges for department management. One major aspect that can be lost, when working remotely, is an employee's collaboration with their team. The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) has published multiple studies that determined that individuals work better when working with others rather than individually; a concept called social facilitation. This concept holds that when working with others an individual is more inspired to work harder than when they work alone. Even though there are additional challenges like this for management, it has also been proven that collaboration can still be obtained with a remote workforce.

In closing, all departments at the City of Fort Worth have been given the ability to adjust and accommodate for employee needs through various ways. This includes working from home as one option but it also includes emergency and traditional sick leave usage, additional leave usage granted for those that participated in the Vaccination reward and incentive program, and special paid quarantine leave benefits for sworn Police, Fire, and City Marshals. At every opportunity, Department Heads, are asked to remain flexible, empathetic and creative in order to give employees every opportunity to remain safe, healthy and productive in their roles.

Any questions can be addressed to Dianna Giordano, Human Resource Director at 817-392-7783 or dianna.giordano@fortworthtexas.gov.

David Cooke
City Manager