

Telecommuting Policy

Due to the nature of the parks interactive face to face, business model and driven by our mission to serve the community through recreation, conservation and education Stark Parks reserves the use of telecommuting options as an opportunity during potential business hardships or in unusual cases where our face to face model will not best serve the public at large. The option to telecommute will be reviewed case by case and is typically granted on a somewhat short term (6 months or less) basis.

Telecommuting allows employees to work at home, or in a satellite location for all or part of their typical workweek. Telecommuting may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not for others. The benefits of telecommuting is not an entitlement, it is not a companywide benefit, and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of your employment.

Procedures

Telecommuting can be informal, such as working from home for a short-term project or on the road during business travel, or a formal, set schedule of working away from the office as described below.

Any telecommuting arrangement made will be on a trial basis for the first three months with check in's as appropriate and may be discontinued at will and at any time at the request of either the telecommuter or Stark Parks. Every effort will be made to provide a 7 days' notice of such change to accommodate commuting or other issues that may arise from the termination of a telecommuting arrangement. There may be instances, however, when no notice is possible.

Eligibility

Individuals requesting formal telecommuting arrangements must be employed with Stark Parks for a minimum of 12 months of continuous, regular employment and must have a satisfactory performance record (no active and ongoing disciplinary write up's or counseling sessions) within the last 12 months or last review period, whichever is greater.

Before entering into any telecommuting agreement, the employee and manager, with the assistance of the human resource manager, will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement, reviewing the following areas:

- Employee suitability— the employee and manager will assess the needs and work habits of the employee as appropriate for successful telecommuters.
- Job responsibilities— the employee and manager will discuss the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a telecommuting arrangement.
- Equipment needs—workspace design considerations and scheduling issues. The employee and manager will review the physical workspace needs and the appropriate location for the telework.
- Tax and other legal implications—the employee must determine any tax or legal implications under IRS, state and local government laws, and/or restrictions of working out of a home-based office. Responsibility for fulfilling all obligations in this area rests solely with the employee.

If the employee, their manager and the park director agree, the human resource department will draft a telecommuting agreement to be signed by all parties, and a three-month trial period will commence.

Evaluation of telecommuter performance during the trial period will include regular interaction by phone and e-mail between the employee and the manager, and weekly face-to-face or video conference meetings to discuss work progress and problems. At the end of the trial period, the employee and manager will each complete an evaluation of the arrangement and make recommendations for continuance or modifications. Evaluation of telecommuter performance beyond the trial period will be consistent with that received by employees working at the office in both content and frequency but will focus on work output and completion of objectives rather than on time-based performance.

An appropriate level of communication between the telecommuter and supervisor will be agreed to as part of the discussion process and will be more formal during the trial period. After conclusion of the trial period, the manager and telecommuter will communicate at a level consistent with employees working at the office or in a manner and frequency that is appropriate for the job and the individuals involved.

Equipment

On a case-by-case basis, Stark Parks will determine, with information supplied by the employee and the direct supervisor and park director, the appropriate equipment needs (including hardware, software, and other office equipment) for each telecommuting arrangement. The human resource manager and information system administrator will serve as resources in this matter. Equipment supplied by the organization will be maintained by the organization. Equipment supplied by the employee, if deemed appropriate by the organization, will be maintained by the employee. Stark Parks accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment and equally, reserves the right to make determinations as to appropriate equipment, subject to change at any time.

Equipment supplied by the organization is to be used for business purposes only. The telecommuter must sign an inventory of all property received and agree to take appropriate action to protect the items from damage or theft. Upon termination of employment, all company property will be returned to Stark Parks no later than the last day employee is paid/employed.

Stark Parks may reimburse the employee for business-related expenses, such as phone calls and shipping costs that are reasonably incurred in carrying out the employee's job provided the employee follows all current purchasing procedures (i.e. prior approval from supervisor, purchase order in place, etc.).

Employee will be responsible for ensuring they have the appropriate internet speed and connection to support the telecommuting work, this expense is not reimbursable through the organization.

The employee will establish an appropriate work environment within his or her home for work purposes. Stark Parks will not be responsible for costs associated with the setup of the employee's home office, such as remodeling, furniture or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to the home office space.

Security

Consistent with the organization's expectations of information security for employees working at the office, telecommuting employees will be expected to ensure the protection of proprietary company and customer information accessible from their home office. Steps include the use of locked file cabinets and desks, regular password maintenance, and any other measures appropriate for the job and the environment.

Any suspicion of a breach of security or theft of Park property or information will need to be reported to the employee's supervisor immediately but no later than the end of the next day in question.

Safety

Employees are expected to maintain their home workspace in a safe manner, free from safety hazards injuries sustained by the employee in a home office location and in conjunction with his or her regular work duties are normally covered by the company's workers' compensation policy. Telecommuting employees are responsible for notifying the employer of such injuries as soon as practicable per Stark Parks' current injury report practices. The employee is liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to his or her home worksite.

Telecommuting is not designed to be a replacement for appropriate child care. Although an individual employee's schedule may be modified to accommodate child care needs, the focus of the arrangement must remain on job performance and meeting business demands.

Time Worked

Telecommuting employees who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act will be required to accurately record all hours worked using Krono's time-keeping system - <https://kronos.starkcountyohio.gov/wfc/navigator/logon>. Please refer to standard operating procedure Kronos PC Punching Instructions found on the shared drive under the SOP Administration/Finance folder.

Telecommuting employees will have set schedule of work time as agreed upon that will in most instances mimic Stark Parks' typical business hours of 8:00a – 4:00p, Monday through Friday unless otherwise specified. It is expected that employees are readily available for work purposes during this defined timeframe.

Hours worked in excess of those scheduled per day and per workweek require the advance approval of the telecommuter's supervisor. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the immediate termination of the telecommuting agreement and may lead to termination of employment. All other policies in place regarding time worked apply please consult our employee handbook for additional information.

Ad Hoc Arrangements

Temporary telecommuting arrangements may be approved for special circumstances (including emergencies and statewide closures). These arrangements are approved on an as-needed basis only, with no expectation of ongoing continuance.

Other informal, short-term arrangements may be made for employees on family or medical leave to the extent practical for the employee and the organization and with the consent of the employee's health care provider, if appropriate.

All ad hoc telecommuting arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the business needs of the organization and will need to be discussed and approved by your manager and park director.