



State of Arkansas

Public Health Emergency Remote Work Policy

PURPOSE

This policy is established to ensure that all essential State services remain available to those who depend on them. The purpose of this policy is to outline provisions covering remote work for employees of Arkansas State Government during any Governor declared public health emergency.

SCOPE

This policy addresses an emergent situation and does not create a past practice or expectation of continuation of this policy outside of a public health emergency event.

POLICY

This policy is established to encourage social distancing during public health emergency events. During the applicability of a Governor's Executive Order, employees whose job duties may be performed by working remotely shall be allowed to do so after receiving approval from the Secretary of his or her Department.

Employment

If authorized to work remotely, the employee's duties, obligations, responsibilities, and conditions of employment with the State will be unaffected by working remotely. Likewise, the employee's salary, retirement benefits, and State-sponsored insurance coverage will remain unchanged by the remote-work arrangement.

All work hours, overtime compensation, and leave usage must conform to Arkansas statutes, applicable federal laws, and to the terms otherwise agreed upon by the employee, supervisor, and Department Secretary. The employee authorized to work remotely must have the pre-approval of his or her supervisor and Department Secretary before working overtime at a remote workplace.

As this policy is implemented to address public health emergency events, the employee authorized to work remotely shall not hold work-related meetings in person with staff, clients, customers, the public, or professional colleagues at his or her residence.

Equipment and Supplies

The employee authorized to work remotely must have a cell phone and an available workspace with appropriate equipment and supplies to do the assigned work at the remote workplace. The employee authorized to work remotely is not required to provide equipment, but Departments may authorize the employee to use employee-owned computer hardware equipment, software, or other equipment deemed necessary to perform the assigned work at a remote workplace if Department resources are not available. The employee will not be reimbursed for any employee-owned equipment he or she uses, including, but not limited to, pens, paper, phones, computer software, computer hardware, modems, wifi network, or cables. Insurance for any employee-owned equipment is the responsibility of the employee.

Any equipment purchases to assist an employee authorized to work remotely must be related to the performance of the employee's specific job duties. Any new equipment purchases specific to working remotely under this policy must be approved by the Secretary of the Department prior to purchase.

Department equipment provided to an employee shall remain the property of the Department and shall be returned to the Department upon the termination of an employee's participation in the remote work program. Additionally, the use of equipment, software, data, supplies, and furniture, if provided by a

Department, is limited to use by authorized persons and for purposes related to State business only. The employee will be responsible for the security of all items furnished by the State.

The employee authorized to work remotely shall obtain from the main office all supplies needed for work at the remote workplace. An inability to perform one's work because of a failure obtain supplies is the responsibility of the employee and may result in the employee using leave for work not performed during work hours.

Remote Workspace

The employee authorized to work remotely must have an available workspace. The available workspace should be maintained in a safe condition, free of hazards that might endanger the employee or Department equipment.

Expenses

The employee authorized to work remotely is responsible for the cost of maintenance, repair, and operation of personal equipment not provided by the State. The employee will not be reimbursed for supplies regularly available at the main office, expenses for phone bills from a personal phone, or expenses for internet usage.

Federal and state tax implications of working remotely and the use of a home office are the responsibility of the employee.

Liability for Injuries While Working Remotely

Employees authorized to work remotely are covered under Arkansas's Workers' Compensation Law for injuries occurring in the course of the actual performance of official duties at the remote workplace, which shall be considered an extension of the Department during the agreed upon working hours.

The employee authorized to work remotely or someone acting on the employee's behalf shall immediately notify the employee's supervisor of any accident or injury that occurs at the remote workplace. The Department and the supervisor should then follow Arkansas's policies regarding the reporting of injuries for employees injured while at work. The Department is not liable for damages to the employee's personal or real property while the employee is working at the remote workplace.

Inspections

The employee's remote workplace is subject to an on-site inspection during normal work hours for the purpose of determining that the remote workplace is safe and free from hazards and to maintain, repair, inspect, or retrieve Department-owned equipment, software, data, or supplies. The Department shall provide the employee authorized to work remotely at least two-hour's notice prior to the inspection of the remote workplace.

Privacy, Confidentiality, and Other Applicable Statutes

The employee and the Department shall institute appropriate safeguards to secure confidential data and information. The employee must still comply with the Privacy Act, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, the Arkansas Personal Information Protection Act, or other state or federal laws when handling documents and information, including when working remotely.

Discipline

Employees authorized to work remotely are still subject to the Department Handbook, disciplinary policies, and drug and alcohol policies, among other personnel policies.