

## TALQUIN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

POLICY NO. 7 - 2 5

SUBJECT: Telework

I. OBJECTIVE:

To establish a policy related to telework. Telework is the concept of working from home or another location, other than a Talquin facility, on a full-time or part-time basis. The Cooperative considers telework to be a viable, flexible work option when both the employee and the job are suited to such an arrangement. Telework may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not for others. Telework is not an entitlement, it is not a companywide benefit, and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with Talquin.

II. POLICY CONTENT:

A. Eligibility:

1. Individuals being considered for telework arrangements must have successfully completed their 6 month probationary period and must have satisfactory performance in their job duties. Exceptions may be allowed by the General Manager under extraordinary conditions, such as pandemics.
2. Before entering into a telework arrangement, the employee and Manager, with the assistance of Human Resources when necessary, will evaluate the suitability of such arrangement, paying particular attention to factors such as:
  - a. Employee Suitability: The Cooperative will assess the needs and work habits of the employee, compared to traits customarily recognized as appropriate for successful telecommuters.
  - b. Job Responsibilities: The Cooperative will assess the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a telework arrangement including the amount of interaction that the position requires with other employees and Members.
  - c. Equipment Needs: The Cooperative will assess workspace design, security and scheduling issues.
  - d. Length of Service: The Cooperative will consider the employee's length of service.
  - e. Performance History: The Cooperative will take into account the employee's performance history. Issues regarding absenteeism, poor performance, insubordination, and tampering or

destruction of Cooperative property will be weighed heavily in determining qualifications for telework.

- f. Independence: The Cooperative will consider the employee's demonstrated ability to work without close supervision.

3. Department Directors will make a determination recommendation to the General Manager. The General Manager will provide final approval.
4. Employees may be permitted to telework as a reasonable accommodation under certain conditions.

B. Procedures:

1. Human Resources will maintain a list of positions designated for eligibility to telework.
2. Employees assigned to positions designated as eligible for teleworking may be provided with opportunities to telework by the Cooperative. Any telework arrangement made will be on a trial basis for up to three (3) months as defined in Section II.C.11, and may be discontinued, at will, at any time at the Cooperative's request.
3. For an employee to be approved to telework, a written request to telework shall be submitted by their direct supervisor to the appropriate manager and/or Department Director. The Department Director will provide a recommendation to the General Manager for final approval.
4. Department Director positions are designated for eligibility to telework. These positions are expected to telework when traveling and when necessary outside of normal working hours. The General Manager will work directly with Department Directors when more structured, scheduled teleworking requirements for these positions are necessary.
5. Upon approval, the employee, supervisor and Department Director shall execute a TEC Telework Request and Acknowledgement form. The completed form shall be sent to Human Resources for inclusion in the employee's official personnel file.
6. In certain circumstances, such as pandemics, natural disasters or other

emergency situations, employees may be assigned to temporarily telework without an official telework arrangement.

C. Terms and Conditions:

1. **Termination of Arrangement:** The employee may voluntarily terminate participation in a telework arrangement at any time. Termination of the arrangement must be done in writing. The Cooperative has the right to terminate employee's participation in a telework arrangement at any time for any reason, if the employee's participation in the arrangement is deemed not to be in the best interest of the Cooperative or the employee fails to comply with the provisions of the telework policy and any related procedures.
2. **Modification of Arrangement:** The Cooperative has the right to modify an employee's participation in a telework arrangement at any time for any reason. Modifications of the arrangement must be done in writing.
3. **Liability:** The Cooperative will not be liable for damages to the employee's property as a result of participation in a telework arrangement. The employee certifies that his/her home provides a safe working environment. For example, the work area has adequate ventilation; electrical equipment is free of recognized hazards; surge protectors are used to protect Cooperative-owned equipment; work area is neat, clean and reasonably quiet; smoke detectors are working; and a fire extinguisher is easily accessible. The Cooperative will not be responsible for operating cost, home maintenance, or any incidental cost (e.g., utilities) associated with the use of the employee's residence. In agreeing to the telework arrangement, the employee agrees to hold the Cooperative harmless against any and all claims, excluding workers compensation claims, arising in the course of participating in a telework arrangement.
4. **Workers' Compensation:** The employee is covered subject to terms and conditions of the Workers Compensation plan if the employee is injured in the course of performing official duties at the telework site. If an injury is caused through employee negligence or failure to maintain safe working conditions, the employee may be subject to non-coverage, disciplinary action, or both.
5. **Inspection:** The supervisor, or another designee assigned by the General Manager, may inspect the telework location periodically to ensure proper maintenance of Cooperative equipment is being performed. The supervisor should provide at least 24 hours of advance notice to the

employee, if possible and reasonable, before an inspection can be performed. Inspections will generally occur during normal working hours, unless agreed otherwise.

6. **Standards of Conduct:** The employee agrees to abide by the Cooperative's standards of conduct and other established state laws, the Cooperative's policies and procedures, and acceptable practices. The employee understands that failure to do so may subject the employee to revocation of the telework arrangement, disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination of employment, or both.

Employees participating in a telework arrangement are prohibited from conducting face-to-face Cooperative business at the telework location except for inspections, delivery and pick-up of materials and work assignments, and equipment maintenance. While telework offers the employee flexibility, the production of a quality work product still requires the employee to dedicate uninterrupted time to completing work assignments. The employee working remotely must make arrangements for childcare, eldercare, installers, repair persons, housekeepers, etc. that do not detract from the employee's ability to produce work product in an efficient and timely manner. An employee who allows such obligations to interfere with work may be subject to revocation of the telework arrangement, disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination of employment, or both.

7. **Work Hours and Location:** The employee is expected to complete all tasks assigned by management at the employee's official work location or the telework site, and not from any other unapproved site or location. Failure to comply with this provision may result in termination of this arrangement and/or other appropriate disciplinary action. Approved locations and working hours will be listed on the TEC Telework Request and Acknowledgement form.

8. **Designated Workspace:** Employees on a telework assignment must designate a workspace within the employee's remote work location for placement and installation of equipment to be used for the assignment. The employee must maintain the workspace in a safe condition, free from hazards, other people and other potential dangers to the employee and to the equipment. The Cooperative must approve the site chosen as the employee's remote workplace. Management may make on-site visits to the employee's remote work location for the purpose of determining that the site is safe, free from hazards, and to maintain, repair, inspect, or retrieve Cooperative-owned equipment, software, data, and/or supplies. In the event that legal action is necessary for the Cooperative to regain possession of Cooperative-owned equipment, software, data, and/or supplies, the employee must pay all costs incurred by the

Cooperative including reasonable attorneys' fees should the Cooperative prevail. Once the designated workspace has been set up, a designated Cooperative representative may visit the employee's home worksite to inspect for possible work hazards, and to maintain, repair, inspect, or retrieve Cooperative-owned equipment, software, data or supplies. Repeat inspections may occur as needed.

9. **Work Assignments:** Employees on a telework assignment are required to maintain the same level of performance, productivity, quality and quantity of work when working remotely as those required of employees working in the Cooperative's offices. Absent prior approval by the supervisor, employees approved to telework must be available by phone and email during scheduled working hours. The employee will meet with the supervisor to receive assignments and to review completed work as necessary or appropriate. The employee will complete all assigned work in a timely manner according to work procedures mutually agreed upon by the employee and the supervisor and will attend all required meetings and/or training sessions.
10. **Reporting to the Cooperative's Offices:** Employees on a teleworking arrangement may be required to report to and/or perform work at the Cooperative's offices at any time as requested by the employee's supervisor or the Cooperative.
11. **Evaluation:** Evaluation of telework performance will include daily interaction by phone and email between the employee and the manager and, when needed, weekly face-to-face meetings to discuss work progress and problems. At the conclusion of the trial period, the employee and manager will each complete an evaluation of the arrangement and make recommendations for continuance or modifications. An appropriate level of communication between the telecommuter and manager 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 seems appropriate for the job and the individuals involved. Evaluation of telework 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. Performance must remain satisfactory for an employee to continue in a telework arrangement. Exceptions or modifications to the evaluation period may be made by the General Manager for extraordinary circumstances, such as a pandemic or other emergency situations.

12. **Program Evaluation:** The supervisor will provide quarterly updates to the Department Director on the progress and work performed by the employee at the telework location.
13. **Attendance and Pay:** All pay, leave and travel entitlement will be based on the employee's official Cooperative office work location, which will be designated on the telework arrangement. The employee's time and attendance will be recorded as if performing official duties at their Cooperative office work location.
14. **Leave and Overtime:** Request for leave and overtime must be approved by the supervisor in advance as established by Cooperative policies and procedures. The employee agrees to follow established procedures for requesting and obtaining approval of leave and overtime. The employee will continue to work in pay status while working at the telework location. The employee agrees that failing to comply with this requirement may subject the employee to revocation of the telework arrangement, disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination of employment, or both.
15. **Reimbursement:** The employee does not relinquish any entitlement to reimbursement for authorized expenses incurred while conducting business for the Cooperative. Prior approval must be obtained before purchasing office supplies or other items for use at the telework location. Employee will be solely responsible for tax and other legal implications for the business use of the employee's home based on Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and state and local government restrictions.
16. **Cooperative Owned Equipment:** To effectively perform assigned tasks, the employee may use Cooperative equipment at the employee's telework location with the approval of the employee's Department Director. The equipment must be protected against damage and unauthorized use by anyone, including the employee. The employee agrees that the Cooperative may deduct the reasonable cost of damage to or loss of Cooperative equipment from the employee's pay, including any final compensation due to the employee. Cooperative owned equipment will be serviced and maintained by the Cooperative.
17. **Equipment Malfunctions or Repairs:** In the event any equipment necessary to perform the telework assignment fails or malfunctions, the employee must immediately notify their supervisor. In the event that repair or replacement of the equipment makes it impossible or inefficient for the employee to continue the telework assignment, the Cooperative, at the Cooperative's sole discretion, may require the employee to report

to a Cooperative workplace, to do a different assignment, or to do no work.

18. **Employee-Provided Equipment:** The Cooperative will not be responsible for costs associated with setup of the employee's home office, such as remodeling, furniture, lighting, repairs, or modifications to the home office space. Employees may request assistance in setting up a work station designed for safe, comfortable work. Furniture, lighting, environmental protection, and household safety equipment incidental to the use of Cooperative-owned equipment, software, and supplies must be appropriate for the intended use and must be used and maintained by the employee in a safe condition, free from defects and hazards. Employees will not use personal vehicles to conduct Cooperative business without pre-approval.
19. **Travel:** Travel from home to the official Cooperative office work location will not be reimbursed. All travel entitlement will be based on the employee's Cooperative office work location.
20. **Safety and Security:** Consistent with the Cooperative's expectations of information security for employees working at the Cooperative's facilities, telework employees will be expected to ensure the protection of proprietary company and Member 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. The employee will apply safeguards that are approved by the Cooperative to protect records from unauthorized disclosure or damage. All records, papers and correspondence must be safeguarded for their return to the Cooperative's office.

Telework employees must not allow non-Cooperative employees to see, copy, or perform work on the materials provided to the employee for telework assignments. Telework employees may not allow a non-Cooperative employee to use Cooperative-owned equipment or software.
21. **Forfeiture of In-Office Workspace:** Employees entering into a telework arrangement may be required to forfeit use of a personal office or workstation on the Cooperative's premises in favor of a shared arrangement to maximize the Cooperative's office space needs.

### III. RESPONSIBILITIES:

- A. The Board of Trustees of Talquin hereby delegates authority to the General Manager or his/her designee to put in place the procedures necessary to

effectuate this policy and to keep such procedures up to date.

- B. The General Manager or his/her designee shall be responsible for the administration of this policy.
- C. Every employee of Talquin Electric Cooperative, Inc. shall be responsible for compliance with this policy.

APPROVED: BOARD OF TRUSTEES

DATE: 7/15/20