



Town of Chapel Hill

Teleworking Guidance for Adverse Events Conditions 1.5 and 2

May 29, 2020

This document is intended to supplement the Town's [Flexible Work Arrangements Policy, PP 8-6](#). The planning guidance provided in this policy can assist departments in implementing remote work in Adverse Events Conditions Phases 1.5 and Phase 2.

Additional resources will be posted shortly. These resources will include such things as examples of teleworking agreements, guidance on establishing effective and safe home working environments, managing, and monitoring telework, and other resources. Please check back frequently. In the meantime, contact any member of this team if you need assistance.

Team:

- John Richardson, Community Resilience Officer
- Rae Buckley, Director, Organizational and Strategic Initiatives
- Anita Badrock, HRD Consultant
- Scott Clark, Technology Solutions Executive Director

Purpose:

1. To provide additional teleworking guidance for Adverse Event Conditions 1.5 and 2 during COVID-19
2. To use this information to strengthen long term teleworking guidance

For information on how this guidance was developed, please see Appendix One Below.

For information regarding future issues to be considered for longer term telecommuting options, see Appendix Two below.

Conditions 1.5 and 2 Guidance

This section provides procedural and protocol guidance that assume the conditions of Adverse Events 1.5 are continuing and that most employees who are currently teleworking will continue to do so at their current level.

Business Protocols

- 1. Establish core business hours.** Departments should set core hours for work when all employees are generally expected to be available for meetings, phone calls, etc. Will help with interdepartmental collaborations especially.
- 2. Formalize flexibility agreements.** Supervisor permission and documentation is needed for employees to work an alternative schedule to the core business hours. If meetings are scheduled outside of the employee's flexible telework schedule but within the core business hours that employee should not accrue overtime or comp time to attend the meeting. Employees with flexible telework schedules should adjust their work time to stay within established workweek hours.
- 3. Create written work plans with agreed upon due dates and deliverables.** Employees are asked to communicate their work plans in writing to their supervisor. Work plans may be largely the same from week to week for some employees and need to be adjusted every week for others. Supervisors and employees should determine frequency and content of work plans. In addition to work plans, supervisors are asked to be specific about expectations for deliverables and when they need responses to emails or phone calls.
- 4. Employees should communicate their availability using the Outlook calendar.** The Outlook calendar tool has become more important now that divisions and teams are no longer located in a physical space together. In a virtual environment it is helpful for supervisors and co-workers to know each other's availability to set up meetings and communicate effectively. Examples of new expectations for using the Outlook calendar include the following actions:
 - a.** Employees are asked to publish calendars in "limited details" level in Outlook that allows everyone to see the title of a meeting but not the content of the meeting invite. Please see instructions below and/or contact Technology Solutions if you need further assistance.
 - b.** Employees are asked to remove meetings from calendars that are not occurring.

- c. When using Outlook calendar to create an optional virtual hang out, meeting organizers should click the “free “box in the meeting invite so it does not block calendar availability. Please see instructions below and/or contact Technology Solutions if you need further assistance.
 - d. Employees are encouraged to mark meetings as private as appropriate and mark time when they are not available for other reasons (can also be private).
5. **Increase communication with employees.** Supervisors are asked to continue to **meet regularly** with remote employees and check on their well-being as well as work.

Technology Guidance

1. **Inventory employee equipment:** Supervisors are asked to have conversations with each teleworker about how their technology, especially hardware, is meeting their operational needs at this time. With Technology Solutions permission, it might be possible to move technology from office to home if needed (example: larger monitors, multiple monitors). Please be sure to track and monitor if Town equipment is moved from Town premises.
2. **Technology Solutions approval of equipment procurement:** All employees are asked to consult Technology Solutions about proposed technology procurement and review funding availability with the budget team of Business Management.
3. **Establish work/life technology boundaries.** Discourage use of personal computers for Town work. Provide laptops to those who must telework. (*issues of public records, security of information*)
4. **Continue employee TEAMS training:** Note additional TEAMS training that would be useful for employees. Share suggestions with Technology Solutions and Human Resource Development. Continue to test functionality and utilize sharing features. Standards of use are currently in development to assist TEAMS users.

INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO CHANGE VISIBLE CALENDAR DETAILS

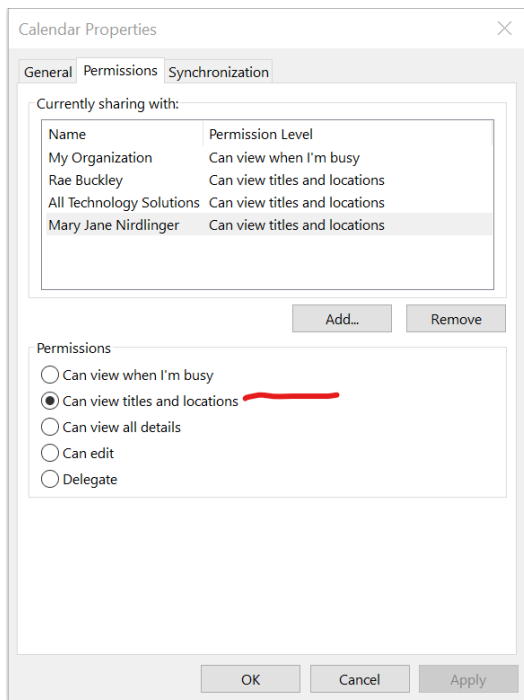
The image shows two overlapping dialog boxes from Microsoft Outlook. The background is the 'Outlook Options' dialog box, with the 'Calendar' tab selected. The 'Work time' section shows work hours from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, with a work week of Monday through Friday. The 'Calendar options' section includes settings for default duration (30 minutes), reminders (15 minutes), and a 'Free/Busy Options...' button. The foreground is the 'Calendar Properties' dialog box, with the 'Permissions' tab selected. It shows a list of users with their permission levels, and the 'Can view when I'm busy' option is selected under the 'Permissions' section.

Broken Down:

This block shows a partial view of the Outlook ribbon and a vertical options menu. The ribbon shows the 'Home' tab with 'New Appointment', 'New Meeting', and 'New Items' buttons. The options menu is open, showing options like 'Info', 'Open & Export', 'Save As', 'Save Attachments', 'Save Calendar', 'Print', 'Office Account', 'Feedback', 'Options', and 'Exit'. The 'Options' option is highlighted with a red line.

Add holidays to the Calendar: [Add Holidays...](#)
 Change the permissions for viewing Free/Busy information: [Free/Busy Options...](#) [Other Free/Busy...](#)

HOW TO ELECT THE PEOPLE OR GROUPS THAT CAN SEE THESE DETAILS OF YOUR CALENDAR.



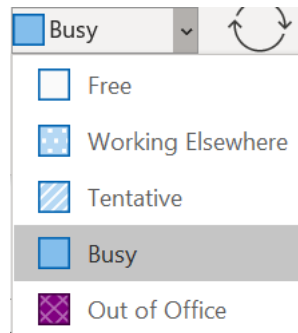
STATUS SETTINGS

Status in Teams:

- Available
- Busy
- Do not disturb
- Be right back
- Appear away

 Reset status

Status in Outlook Calendar



Appendix 1 Methodology and Information Used to Develop This Guidance

As part of the process of developing this guidance, the team solicited input in the following ways. The survey and outreach results are summarized below.

Methodology:

1. A focus group that included supervisors who are teleworking and managing teleworkers.
2. A teleworking survey sent to all teleworking employees. 106 responses received from ~270 Town employees who are currently teleworking at least some of the workweek.
3. Review of policies from municipalities and universities for best practices.

Survey findings:

1. Most employees **like teleworking** and are interested in continuing to telework, though most do not want to do so 100% of the time.
2. Many people report working **flexible hours**—either starting earlier in the day or working later into the evening. Many employees are juggling childcare which makes flexibility necessary. Yet other employees state that **sometimes people are not available** during business hours when they would otherwise be if everyone was in the office.
3. **Home office set ups are generally working**, though most would prefer better or additional equipment if telework becomes a long-term situation.
4. Employees report **better productivity** without interruptions but also note **missing the aspect of work** where employees spontaneously interact and share ideas.
5. Employees also report **multiple benefits** from teleworking, including less driving, saving money on transportation and lower environmental impacts.
6. Most employees would like additional training on using Teams.
7. A frequently noted barrier to teleworking is the **lack of an e-signature function** inside business processes.

Appendix 2 Considerations and Suggestions for Long Term Telecommuting Relationships

Preliminary Phase 3 Considerations

This document does not yet provide guidance for Phase 3. The appendix provides topics to consider as the Town moves into a phase with more employees in a physical office location with some continued teleworking to maintain safe working conditions. As of May 20, 2020, the team is including these topics for consideration and seeking feedback.

1. **Equipment:** Departments should evaluate what technology/equipment is required to do Town business versus what is nice to have. What equipment will your department provide? What is the budget impact? How to support offsite setup and maintenance? Coordination with Technology Solutions is vital prior to purchasing any equipment.
2. **Suitability:** Consider how to determine if long term telework is feasible. Some employees are currently teleworking due to safety issues and necessity, not necessarily because their jobs are well suited to it. These employees may be reluctant to return to an “in office” requirement. The Town asks that supervisors explore options for these employees that might include staggered/flexible schedules or limited telework if possible. If telework is not possible, departments should review their safety protocols to assure that these employees are being protected to the extent possible.
3. **Safety and feasibility:** For optional teleworking, employees should consider whether their home provides a functional work environment. Factors such as data security, safety of Town equipment, and the physical safety of the home workspace may be considered. The Town may require a release of liability. Additionally, teleworkers must have functional and reliable internet access. A future consideration is whether employees should telework who cannot reliably connect to video meetings.
4. **Mixed teams:** How to manage teams when some employees are in the office and some employees are working remotely. Supervisors will need help with this transition and will need training on long term management of teleworkers. The Town is working on creating TEAM friendly conference rooms to allow a mix of in-person and remote workers to participate in meetings.
5. **Schedule:** What are the operational considerations that need to be met and how to accommodate more teleworking.