

Telework Policy

POLICY NUMBER: HR-22-01

TYPE OF POLICY: Human Resources

EFFECTIVE: September 1, 2025

The most current version of this policy will always be the online version.

PURPOSE

This policy provides the necessary guidance, tools, and standards for the implementation and management of telework arrangements at Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), and serves as the agency's telework plan as required by [Government \(Gov't\) Code §658.012\(b\)](#).

BACKGROUND

Telework is a work arrangement between an employee and the agency that allows the employee to conduct state business at a remote worksite (e.g., home office) during established business hours, instead of commuting to an official worksite (e.g., TPWD Headquarters, field office, state park). Effective September 1, 2025, state agency administrative heads are authorized to approve employee telework agreements in accordance with established agency telework policies, procedures, and a publicly available telework plan ([Gov't Code §658.0001; 658.011-012](#)).

The agency's telework plan (i.e., this policy) must include clear criteria for evaluating whether an employee's duties are suitable for telework, establish performance standards and a system for monitoring productivity, and implement appropriate physical and information security measures for remote worksites. Additionally, the plan must ensure teleworking employees are held to the same rules and disciplinary standards as their in-office counterparts and explicitly prohibit in-person business from being conducted at an employee's personal residence.

DEFINITIONS

business need

requirements to operate effectively and efficiently in support of TPWD's mission.

essential functions

the duties and responsibilities that are fundamental to a position.

office sharing

an office organization system that involves multiple workers using an assigned single physical workstation or surface during different time periods (e.g., two employees working in-office on different days share one assigned office space).

official worksite

the employee's designated work location for the purposes of conducting business where functional job tasks and duties are performed; the location where an employee would work absent a telework arrangement. Examples include: TPWD Headquarters, State Parks, Wildlife Management Areas, Fish Hatcheries, an administrative field office, home office for certain positions.

position suitability

the determination of whether a position is conducive or suitable for telework based on the official duties of the position that can be performed away from the employee's official worksite without impacting productivity, operational efficiency, customer service, and team collaboration.

remote worksite

an assigned location other than the employee's official worksite that has been approved by the supervisor for teleworking.

sensitive information

information that must be controlled or safeguarded by the agency to prevent unauthorized access and disclosure.

state record

any written, photographic, machine-readable, or other recorded information created or received by or on behalf of a state agency or an elected state official that documents activities in the conduct of state business or use of public resources. This also includes an official copy that supplies information on organization, function, policy, procedure, operation, or other activity.

It does not include published, or museum material acquired and/or preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes; extra copies of documents preserved only for convenience of reference; or stocks of publications, blank forms, and duplicated documents.

telework

an alternative work arrangement between an employee and the agency that allows the employee to conduct TPWD business at a remote worksite instead of commuting to the employee's official worksite during all or a portion of the employee's established work hours ([Gov't Code §658.001\(3\)](#)).

POLICY STATEMENT

While telework is not considered a condition of employment, regular telework arrangements may be authorized on a case-by-case basis if (1) the position is eligible and suitable for telework; (2) teleworking aligns with TPWD business needs; and (3) an agreement is approved by the Executive Director (ED) or designee to address a lack of available office space or provide reasonable flexibility that enhances the agency's ability to achieve its mission.

TPWD's standard for *regular* teleworking is 2 days per week or less at a remote worksite. Exceptions to this (i.e., more than 2 days) require Chief Operating Officer (COO) and ED approval. Additionally, other forms of telework (i.e., situational, emergency) may be approved under specific circumstances. For signature and approval authority at TPWD, refer to the Signature and Approval Authority Policy (OP-03-03).

TPWD may refuse to allow an employee to telework or revoke a telework agreement at any time and for any reason without notice, provided the refusal does not violate agency policy or other law ([Gov't Code §658.011\(b\)\(2\)](#)). Nothing in this policy alters the at-will status of employees.

Teleworking does not change the nature of the work a TPWD employee is expected to safely perform or the employee's work hours, official duty station/worksites, or obligation to comply with applicable laws, regulations, and policies.

General Telework Guidelines

- All telework arrangements must be authorized in accordance with this policy.
- Each division must maintain a telework plan tailored to its operational needs. These division-specific plans are reviewed and approved by the COO to ensure agency-wide consistency. Division plans must align with TPWD policies and procedures.
- Employees approved to telework are expected to establish an effective remote office, including the location, furniture, phone, and internet access, without financial assistance from TPWD.
- Employees must comply with all applicable agency policies and procedures regardless of where or when work is performed, including attendance, time, and leave policies. The same standards apply to all employees regarding job performance, availability, responsiveness, productivity, and protection of agency equipment, systems, and information, regardless of telework status ([Gov't Code §658.012](#)).
- Employees should be able to perform all duties while teleworking as though they were in the office.
- The salaries and benefits for teleworkers remain the same as those at their official worksite. Salaries should be determined without regard to telework status.
- Employment decisions are made regardless of an employee's telework status. Supervisors are expected to treat teleworking employees the same as those working in the office, particularly regarding performance monitoring and evaluation, training, and addressing conduct issues.
- Performance standards for teleworking employees are established and evaluated using TPWD's performance management processes and system outlined in the Performance Management Policy (HR-03-04) and the Performance, Conduct, and Disciplinary Action Process (HR-18-01).
- Employees must not conduct in-person business at the employee's personal residence ([Gov't Code 658.012\(a\)\(3\)](#)).
- Telework is not a substitute for childcare or eldercare.
- Telework does not include the following work arrangements:
 - an arrangement in which the essential functions of a job must be performed at a location other than an office-type setting (e.g., game warden, field biologist).
 - an arrangement in which the essential functions of a job must be performed at a remote worksite by a person on travel status (e.g., auditors, recruiters).
 - work performed while traveling for state business.

Types of Telework

There are 3 types of telework:

- **emergency telework**—a temporary work arrangement that is implemented upon approval by the ED (or designee) due to emergency situations (e.g., inclement weather, natural disasters, terroristic threats, public health events, building closure) that:
 - does not require a formal Telework Agreement (PWD-1228B) and
 - may require employees who are approved for regular and/or situational telework to telework in lieu of using emergency leave.

- **regular telework**—a flexible work arrangement that allows employees to work from an approved remote worksite on a scheduled and recurring basis with approved days to telework and days to report to the official worksite. Regular telework:
 - requires a DD-approved Telework Agreement (PWD-1228B) prior to starting telework;
 - requires approval by the supervisor, DD (or designee), and ED (or designee) for up to 2 days of telework per week;
 - requires approval by the supervisor, DD (or designee), COO, and ED for 3 days or more of telework per week;
 - may include the use of flexible schedules or other alternate work schedules; and
 - requires employees who are approved for regular telework to telework in lieu of using emergency leave in certain situations.
- **situational telework**—an occasional, short-term/temporary, and non-recurring work arrangement that allows employees to work from a remote worksite. This type of telework is contingent upon the nature of the employee's responsibilities, the feasibility of completing them remotely, and the operational needs of the agency. The requirement for ED approval (HB 5196, 89R 2025) is not applicable to situational telework. Situational telework:
 - requires a DD-approved Telework Agreement (PWD-1228B) prior to starting telework;
 - must be approved by the supervisor for each individual instance;
 - is intended for intermittent use only (e.g., scheduling around personal appointments, working on focused projects, attending a virtual training/conference, reviewing/editing documents, waiting for a service provider at home);
 - may be requested due to personal circumstances (e.g., supporting a family member during intermittent medical care) that necessitate being away from the primary worksite during normal business hours; and
 - requires employees who are approved for situational telework to telework in lieu of using emergency leave.

Out-of-State Telework

- Due to significant risks related to taxation and employment law compliance, TPWD does not approve requests for regular telework in another state except in very limited circumstances. Exceptions require a Telework Agreement (PWD-1228B) approved by the DD, COO, and ED prior to starting telework.
- This does not limit employees from performing work in another state while on official travel status.

Telework as a Reasonable Accommodation

Requests to telework as a reasonable accommodation are handled through the accommodation process in the Reasonable Workplace Accommodations Policy (HR-03-07).

Telework Participation

TPWD considers the following when determining whether an employee is eligible for telework:

- business needs of the agency;
- lack of available office space;
- nature of the employee's job classification and duties (i.e., position suitability);

- employee's past and present levels of job performance, conduct, and work habits; and
- security of sensitive information – ensuring information is adequately protected from disclosure and agency assets are safeguarded while teleworking.

Position Suitability

A position's suitability for telework is based on the agency's business needs as well as the duties and responsibilities of the position defined in the employee's functional job description (FJD). While suitability is an important factor, it does not guarantee that an employee will be allowed to telework. Division staff should use the following strategies to determine telework eligibility:

- Identifying eligible positions using the Position Suitability Checklist for Telework form (PWD-1228C).
- Implementing telework arrangements on a trial basis to assess suitability as appropriate.
- Considering situational telework if the position is deemed ineligible for *regular* telework.

Unless otherwise approved by the COO, the following positions are only eligible for *situational* and *emergency* telework:

- Division Directors
- Deputy Division Directors
- Executive Assistants

Agency Business Needs

- An employee's ability to telework is always subject to the agency's discretion.
- Supervisors may require an employee who is approved to telework to be physically present at their official worksite on a normally scheduled telework day.
- A supervisor may deny a telework request if the proposed telework arrangement does not align with the agency's business needs. For example, a request to telework from a remote location several hours away may be denied if it limits the employee's ability to report onsite when required or a request to telework on a day that there is a regular in-person meeting.

Protecting Sensitive Information and Agency Assets

- An employee is not allowed to telework if adequate protection of sensitive information and agency assets at the employee's remote worksite cannot be guaranteed ([Gov't Code §658.012\(a\)\(1\)\(D\)](#)).
- Employees should use locked file cabinets, regular password maintenance, and any other measures appropriate for the job and the environment as documented in the Information Technology Telework Standards and Guidelines (PWD-1234).
- TPWD business mail may not be directly mailed to a teleworker's home address. It is the teleworker's responsibility to collaborate with in-office staff to ensure that mail is opened, secured, and acted upon in a timely manner. Additional action by in-office staff (e.g., scanning, emailing, bundling, sending to the teleworker) ultimately resides with the supervisor, factoring in the nature of the business mail and the best use of agency resources/budget.

Employee Performance, Conduct, and Work Habits

When evaluating a telework request for an employee, the supervisor must consider whether the employee consistently meets job performance and conduct expectations.

An employee who is not currently meeting performance and conduct standards, or who has received corrective action (see Performance, Conduct, and Disciplinary Process (HR-18-01)) within the past 6 months, is not eligible for regular or situational telework.

Telework Arrangements

A Telework Agreement (PWD-1228B) is a written document that states the business reasons supporting the authorization and outlines the terms and conditions of a telework arrangement, including the start date, telework schedule (days and hours), and location. The agreement must be approved before teleworking begins. To ensure clarity and consistency, employees requesting a telework arrangement must follow the proper procedures and adhere to established guidelines.

Below are key points regarding telework arrangements:

- Employees requesting telework must complete and submit the following forms to establish or renew a telework arrangement or to request changes to or terminate an existing telework arrangement.
- Forms are then routed for final approval through the employee's supervisor and submitted to HR for filing in the employee's personnel file.
 - **Telework Request form (PWD-1228A)** – Employee submits to immediate supervisor to make the request for approval to telework.
 - **Position Suitability Checklist for Telework (PWD-1228C)** – Completed by the immediate supervisor to assess the position's suitability for all types of telework, considering the business need and employee eligibility. The immediate supervisor approves or disapproves the position's suitability for telework and submits to HR regardless of whether the request is approved or not.
 - **Designation of Employee's Home as Worksite (PWD-1229)** – Employee submits to immediate supervisor to designate personal residence as a remote worksite.
 - **Information Technology Telework Standards and Guidelines (PWD-1234)** – Completed by the employee to confirm that remote connectivity is secure and reliable, ensuring the integrity and security of agency data.
 - **Telework Agreement (PWD-1228B)** – Upon approval of the Telework Request (PWD-1228A) and Position Suitability Checklist for Telework (PWD-1228C), employee and immediate supervisor complete the Telework Agreement (PWD-1228B) and submit for approvals.
 - When submitting the Telework Agreement (PWD-1228B) for *regular* telework, the supervisor is responsible for determining each individual's telework schedule. This includes:
 - the number of telework days per week,
 - the specific telework days and working hours, and
 - the situations/circumstances under which telework is permitted.
 - Approvals for the Telework Agreement (PWD-1228B) are based on the type of telework and the number of days requested. For signature and

approval authority for telework, refer to the Signature and Approval Authority Policy (OP-03-03).

- For *situational* telework arrangements, the initial Telework Agreement (PWD-1228B) must be approved by the DD and each instance of telework is approved by the supervisor.
- For *regular* telework arrangements of up to 2 days of telework per week, the agreement must be approved by the ED (or designee).
- For *regular* telework arrangements of 3 or more days of telework per week, the agreement must be approved by the DD, COO, and the ED and documented in the division's telework plan.
- If an employee requests a schedule that differs from standard work hours, the Alternative Work Schedule Request (PWD-0545) must be included with the Telework Agreement, if not already on file with HR. Refer to Standard Work Hours and Alternative Work Schedules Policy (HR-03-12) for additional information.
- All *regular* telework agreements must be renewed annually in accordance with [Gov't Code §658.011\(b\)\(1\)\(D\)](#). Renewals are approved using the same approval process as establishing a new or modifying an existing agreement.
- An employee or supervisor may request modifications to a telework arrangement (e.g., changing the regular teleworking day or location) by submitting a revised telework request and/or agreement.

Changes to an employee's position may require a review and re-approval of any existing telework arrangement. If the position's essential functions change, a review is required to determine continued position suitability and business need.

Time and Attendance

- Teleworkers must follow the same policies and procedures as non-teleworkers when requesting and obtaining leave approval.
- Employees and supervisors are required to comply with all timekeeping and overtime regulations defined by state or federal law (e.g., Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)) and agency policies.

Telework and Use of Personal Leave

- Supervisors may allow employees to situationally telework in lieu of using paid leave, if work performance is not affected, on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with their division's telework plan.
- Employees are expected to use paid leave for periods of time off in which they are too ill or otherwise unavailable to work.

Teleworking with Family Members at Home

- Telework is not to be used as a replacement for appropriate childcare or care for other dependents or family members, such as elderly parents or disabled family members.
- Care arrangements should be such that the employee may leave home immediately or come in on a telework day when needed to address job-related issues.
- Working at home while providing dependent care may be approved during emergency telework situations, as communicated by executive leadership.

- An employee's telework arrangement may be temporarily modified, with approval via email by an employee's supervisor and DD, to occasionally accommodate the need to care for a child or other family members.

Agency and Office Closures

- Emergency leave is granted at the discretion of the ED (or designee). Teleworkers who believe they should be granted such leave must discuss their situation with their supervisor and/or HR.
- An employee who is scheduled to telework on a day their official worksite is closed (e.g., inclement weather, building closure) is expected to work from their remote worksite. If a teleworker is unable to work from their remote worksite due to inclement weather, they should travel to their official worksite only if it is safe to do so or request use of personal leave.
- Employees who are approved for telework will be required to telework in lieu of using emergency leave.
- An employee who is unable to work at both their official worksite and at their remote worksite due to inclement weather may be required to use personal leave.

Ability to Report to Office

- Employees approved for telework may be expected to physically report to their official worksite at a minimum frequency to engage in team collaboration and maintain in-person relationships.
- Employees authorized to telework are expected to report to their official worksite upon directive from their supervisor or the agency. A telework agreement does not prohibit TPWD from requiring an employee to report to their official worksite on a day which the agreement authorizes telework ([Gov't Code 658.011\(d\)](#)). Additionally, employees may be required to return to their official worksite if their remote worksite becomes unsuitable for work.

Office Sharing

- For employees reporting to their official worksites 3 or more days per week, an assigned workspace will be provided.
- For employees reporting to their official worksites fewer than 3 days per week, a secured workspace will be provided or may be reserved. Divisions have the flexibility to allocate assigned workspace and workstations to meet their business needs.

Workers' Compensation

- Work-related injuries at the remote worksite may be covered by workers' compensation as determined by the State Office of Risk Management (SORM).
- Employees are required to report any work-related illness or injury to their supervisor immediately. Employees are required to fill out an incident report within 24 hours of the event or claim.
- Refer to Benefits Policy (HR-03-15) and TPWD Risk Management Manual for additional information related to workers' compensation.

Alternative Work Schedules

Alternative work schedules, such as flexible schedules and compressed workweeks, can be used in conjunction with telework. Refer to Standard Work Hours and Alternative Work Schedules Policy (HR-03-12) for additional information related to alternative work schedules.

Travel and Use of State Vehicles

- Employees who are traveling for state business are not considered to be teleworking.
- A teleworking employee may still engage in travel. For example, an employee normally teleworks from their home in Austin on Mondays and Tuesdays and is required to travel to Waco for a meeting on a Tuesday. The time spent traveling to Waco, attending the meeting, and returning from Waco is considered travel, not telework.
- Employees who telework may be required to go to their official worksite to get a TPWD vehicle to use for travel.
- Employees who telework may not take a TPWD vehicle to their remote worksite without supervisor approval and a determination of economic feasibility (TPWD Fleet Management Manual).
- Driving from an approved remote worksite to an official worksite does not constitute travel status.
- Teleworkers may not use TPWD vehicles to commute between their remote and official worksites unless the vehicle has been designated as “commute approved assigned” (TPWD Fleet Management Manual).

Signature and Approval Process

All TPWD documents and transactions must be approved in accordance with the Signature and Approval Authority Policy (OP-03-03), regardless of telework arrangements. Supervisors will provide guidance to employees when it is acceptable to use alternatives to original signatures, such as digital signatures and email confirmation of approval.

IT and Equipment Requirements

TPWD teleworkers should refer to the Information Technology Telework Standards and Guidelines (PWD-1234) for additional guidance and best practices.

- Employees must comply with all TPWD Information Technology (IT)-related policies and standards and instructions, including those regarding the security of confidential information.
- Equipment, software, and supplies provided by TPWD for use at the remote worksite may only be used by the employee and only for purposes related to TPWD work. The teleworker must properly protect and secure all TPWD-owned data, software, equipment, and supplies and ensure that they are used only for TPWD purposes.
- Specific equipment and supplies provided to a teleworker are at the discretion of each division and should be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- Teleworkers may face financial liability for loss or damage to state-owned equipment if the loss or damage results from the employee’s negligence, intentional act, or failure to exercise reasonable care, safeguarding, maintenance, or service of the equipment.
- Supervisors should maintain an inventory of all agency-issued equipment utilized for telework.
- Teleworkers must immediately return all agency property to their official worksite upon separation or termination of their telework agreement.

Records and Information Management

- TPWD employees working from a remote worksite must maintain, store, and preserve all state records created or received during the course of official work in accordance with

[Gov't Code §§441.180-.192](#), [Gov't Code Ch. 552](#) (Texas Public Information Act), [13 Texas Administrative Code, Ch. 6](#), and TPWD's Records Management Policy (OP-22-01).

- Original records and records of retention (including hard copy and electronic) must be retained in accordance with the TPWD-approved and certified Records Retention Schedule (RRS) and under the guidance of the Records Management Branch of the Support Resources Division.
- Teleworkers should contact the Agency Records Management Officer or branch staff for more information on managing records.
- Separating employees must return all records before or upon departure from the agency. The employee and their supervisor must ensure that all agency records are returned, including retrieval of records from personally owned devices. Refer to Separation Policy (HR-03-08) for additional information related to employee separation.

HISTORY

Original publication date and subsequent revisions:

- 2025 September 1: policy revised to align with new legislation from the 89th Legislative Session authorizing telework for state agencies.
- 2022 April 1: original effective date; policy created in response to agencywide employee and manager surveys to determine how TPWD could improve the TPWD Telework Program.