

**SECTION: HUMAN RESOURCES**

**NO: HR-HS-53**

**REFERENCE: HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**Date:** March 26, 2020

**Review Date: TBD**

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**TITLE: COVID-19 Working From Home**

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## 1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

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City of Dryden understands that some employees may benefit from the option to work from home during unprecedented circumstances, specifically the COVID-19 Pandemic. On March 19, 2020, the Ontario Legislature passed the *Employment Standards Amendment Act (Infectious Disease Emergencies), 2020* to ensure protection to employees who are required to be isolated or quarantined as a result of COVID-19, or for those who need to be away from work to care for children or other relatives.

### ***Job-Protected Leave***

*from Employment Standards Amendment Act (Infectious Disease Emergencies), 2020*

*The act provides job protection for employees unable to work for the following reasons:*

- *The employee is under medical investigation, supervision or treatment for COVID-19.*
- *The employee is acting in accordance with an order under the Health Protection and Promotion Act.*
- *The employee is in isolation or quarantine in accordance with public health information or direction.*
- *The employer directs the employee not to work due to a concern that COVID-19 could be spread in the workplace.*
- *The employee needs to provide care to a person for a reason related to COVID-19 such as a school or day-care closure.*
- *The employee is prevented from returning to Ontario because of travel restrictions.*

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Dryden will attempt to help support employees so that they may continue to work from home. This policy outlines the process used and expectations for employees working from home.

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## **2.0 GUIDELINES**

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- 2.1 This policy does not alter or replace the terms of an existing employment contract and is in conjunction with all City of Dryden policies as well as collective agreements. Employees must comply with all City of Dryden rules, policies, practices, and instructions that would apply if the employee were working at the regular City of Dryden worksite.
- 2.2 Work hours, compensation, and leave scheduling will continue to conform to applicable policies and agreements. Requests to work overtime or use leave time must be approved by the employee's supervisor in the same manner.

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## **3.0 APPROVAL PROCESS**

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- 3.1 Permission to work from home must be pre-approved and will be reviewed regularly by the employee's supervisor. These requests may come from the supervisor directly, or the employee can submit the request in writing to the supervisor.
- 3.2 The City of Dryden reserves the right to revoke the agreement once the COVID-19 pandemic ceases to exist.

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## **4.0 PAYROLL**

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- 4.1 Employees who are paid hourly and who are working from home must submit time sheets for all time spent working offsite. No changes will be made to the method of payment or the amount. If an employee is found to have made false reports on their time sheets, they may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.
- 4.2 Expenses will be approved at the discretion of the manager.

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## **5.0 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

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- 5.1 Working from home should not affect an employee's ability to complete day-to-day functions, including communicating with colleagues, management, customers, and so on. Employees must stay updated on department and work events.
- 5.2 Employees must check in with supervisors daily, typically at the start of the work day. The start time can change on a case-by-case basis and will be approved by the supervisor prior to starting work from home.
- 5.3 The employee will keep supervisors informed on the progress of assignments and reach out for support if needed. Virtual meetings are the preferred method of communication during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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## **6.0 USE OF CITY OF DRYDEN PROPERTY**

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- 6.1 Employees must use City of Dryden provided devices when working from home to ensure that the appropriate software and programs are being used while maintaining data security and confidentiality. All completed and working copies of documents must be saved on the City of Dryden online system with limited access so that information is available to those who may require its use from the City of Dryden worksite. Failure to use City of Dryden approved devices may leave City of Dryden data vulnerable to a breach and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- 6.2 City of Dryden owned resources may only be used for business purposes. Employees must take reasonable steps to protect any City of Dryden property from theft, damage, or misuse. Depending on the circumstances, the employee may be responsible for any damage to or loss of City of Dryden property.
- 6.3 Employees are ultimately responsible for providing adequate and appropriate workspace and furnishings while working from home. If the employee is unable to provide a safe and hazard free workspace, the City of Dryden will attempt to provide resources, such as work chair, etc.

## 7.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

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- 7.1 City of Dryden is committed to ensuring that the alternate worksite is safe and ergonomic. Employees are to take full responsibility to ensure their home workspace is safe and free from hazards. The Health and Safety Coordinator will be available for virtual visits to the employee's work site, at a mutually agreed upon time, to ensure that the designated work space is safe and free from hazards. The City of Dryden will attempt to work with employees to address any safety concerns.
- 7.2 Employees will complete a Safe Home Inspection sheet prior to starting work from home. The inspection will include items such as ensuring the smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm are in working order; having two available emergency exits that are free from clutter and debris; and that the work space is free of clutter and possible trip hazards.

## 8.0 END OF AGREEMENT

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- 8.1 At the end of a work from home agreement, employees must promptly return all City of Dryden property used for working at home. An employee, current or former, may receive notices from City of Dryden to return City of Dryden property. Failure to do so may result in discipline for current employees or legal action if the employee no longer works for the City of Dryden. If an agreement is being revoked, employees will receive reasonable notice to make any arrangements necessary to return the City of Dryden property to the worksite.

| History                       |                |                     |               |
|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------|
| <b>Approval Date:</b>         | March 26, 2020 | <b>Approved by:</b> | CAO R. Nesbit |
| <b>Review/Amendment Date:</b> |                | <b>Approved by:</b> |               |
| <b>Review/Amendment Date:</b> |                | <b>Approved by:</b> |               |
| <b>Review/Amendment Date:</b> |                |                     |               |

### Acknowledgement and Agreement

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Working from Home Policy of City of Dryden. Further, I agree to adhere to this policy and will ensure that employees working under my direction adhere to this policy. I understand that if I violate the rules or procedures outlined in this policy, I may face disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

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|----------------|------------|
| Employee Name: | Signature: |
| Department:    | Job Title: |
| Supervisor:    | Signature: |
| Date:          |            |

| Employee Initials | SAFE HOME INSPECTION CHECKLIST                                                         | Date |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
|                   | Lighting is adequate for the task being performed.                                     |      |
|                   | Smoke alarm is close to work station and has been tested to confirm it is operational. |      |
|                   | Carbon monoxide alarm(s) have been tested to confirm they are operational.             |      |
|                   | Floors are clear of trip hazards.                                                      |      |
|                   | Workspace free from clutter, loose electrical cords, etc.                              |      |
|                   | Minimum two emergency exits, free from debris and clutter.                             |      |
|                   | Emergency contact numbers (supervisor, JHSC members) printed and easily accessible.    |      |
|                   | Ensure employee emergency contact number is up to date.                                |      |