



Natural Resources Conservation Service
210 Walnut Street, Room 693
Des Moines, IA 50309-2180

October 22, 2013

IOWA INSTRUCTION 360-398 FIRST EDITION – PROCESSING TELEWORK REQUESTS
FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

IA398.0 PURPOSE

In accordance with 360 General Manual, Part 429 – Telecommuting Policy, Amendment 152, dated July 2013, Iowa NRCS supports maximizing telecommuting opportunities within mission requirements to attract, recruit, and retain a skilled workforce.

The Telecommuting Policy assigns the responsibility for approval of telework agreements upon the immediate supervisor. This instruction is written to assist the first-level supervisor in his/her decision of whether to approve or disapprove a telework request.

IA398.1 SCOPE

These instructions shall be used by NRCS Federal employees requesting to telework at an NRCS office.

IA398.2 FILING INSTRUCTIONS

This Iowa Instruction will be posted on the Iowa NRCS Employee Website, which can be accessed under the Iowa NRCS eDirectives System section at this link [Iowa NRCS eDirectives website](#).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jay T. Mar".

Jay T. Mar
State Conservationist

Attachments

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Helping People Help the Land

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

IOWA INSTRUCTION 360-398 FIRST EDITION – PROCESSING TELEWORK REQUESTS
FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

(IA Instruction 360-398 First Edition – September 2013)

1. PURPOSE:

The Telecommuting Policy assigns the responsibility for approval of telework agreements upon the immediate supervisor. This instruction is provided to assist the first-level supervisor in his/her decision of whether to approve or disapprove a telework request.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

All decisions to disapprove or terminate a Telework Agreement must be based on business needs or performance and not on personal reasons. If the request is to telework at an employee's residence, it is the responsibility of the employee and the supervisor to ensure the environment is safe for the employee and that appropriate facilities are available to safeguard government equipment and Personally Identifiable Information (PII).

All teleworkers are responsible for ensuring open lines of communication. It is very important that supervisors work with all of their employees, especially those who have chosen to telework to ensure their ability to answer the following questions at all times:

- Do you know where your employees are?
- Do you know what they are working on?
- Can you produce work products that justify the hours submitted by your employees on their timesheets?

It is recommended that supervisors take the following actions to ensure that the provisions of the telework agreement and this instruction are followed:

- Request permission to access and review all of their employees' Outlook Calendars and Tasks.
- Require employees to record tasks in Outlook Tasks.
- Assign Tasks to employees using Outlook Tasks.
- Set up a sign-in / sign-out system in the office to ensure that everyone knows where other employees are.
- Schedule weekly meetings to discuss workload, priorities, schedule, telework, leave, etc.
- On a regular basis, ask for information from employees on work products they have produced.
- Ensure that employees who are teleworking inform the employees at their official duty station so they also know where they are.
- Ensure that the supervisor and co-workers are aware of how to contact the teleworker.

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3. PROCESS:

- **If the request is from an employee located in a NRCS Service Center, the following steps will be taken:**
 - **If the requested Telework location is within the same Area as that of the requesting employee:**
 - The employee's supervisor will forward the Proposed Telework Site Request for Approval/Comments (see Example A), to the manager of the proposed telework site.
 - Upon return of the Proposed Telework Site Request for Approval/Comments from the telework site's office manager, the supervisor will contact his/her Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations (ASTC-FO) to discuss the placement of the employee at the proposed telework site.
 - The ASTC-FO will only have the authority to approve or disapprove the proposed telework site, based on business needs.
 - **If the requested Telework location is not within the same Area as that of the requesting employee:**
 - The employee's supervisor will forward the Proposed Telework Site Request for Approval/Comments to his/her ASTC-FO.
 - The ASTC-FO will forward the Proposed Telework Site Request for Approval/Comments to the ASTC-FO of the Area in which the proposed telework site is located.
 - The manager of the proposed telework site and his/her ASTC-FO will discuss the request. The manager will complete the form and return it to his/her ASTC-FO for signature and approval/disapproval. It is recommended that both ASTC-FOs communicate during this consideration process. *Approval or disapproval may only be based on business needs.*
 - The Proposed Telework Site Request for Approval/Comments will be returned to the requesting employee's supervisor with a carbon copy of the form sent to the supervisor's ASTC-FO.
 - The supervisor will complete the telework agreement based on the information provided in the Proposed Telework Site Request for Approval/Comments.
 - **If the requested telework location is within the Iowa State Office:**
 - The employee's supervisor will forward the Proposed Telework Site Request for Approval/Comments to his/her ASTC-FO.
 - The ASTC-FO will forward the Proposed Telework Site Request for Approval/Comments the Assistant State Conservationist for Management.
 - The ASTC-Management and the employee's ASTC-FO will discuss the request. The ASTC-Management will complete the form and return it to the employee's supervisor. *Approval or disapproval may only be based on business needs.*

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- The supervisor will complete the telework agreement based on the information provided in the Proposed Telework Site Request for Approval/Comments.
- **If the request is from an employee located in the Iowa State Office, the following steps will be taken:**
 - The employee's supervisor will forward the Proposed Telework Site Request for Approval/Comments to ASTC-FO in which the telework site is located.
 - The ASTC-FO and the manager of the proposed telework site will discuss the request. The manager will complete the form and return it to the ASTC-FO for signature and approval/disapproval. *Approval or disapproval may only be based on business needs.*
 - The Proposed Telework Site Request for Approval/Comments will be returned to the requesting employee's supervisor.
 - The supervisor will complete the telework agreement based on the information provided in the Proposed Telework Site Request for Approval/Comments.

Approved By:

Date:

Jay T. Mar
State Conservationist
Natural Resources Conservation Service
210 Walnut Street, Room 693
Des Moines, IA 50309-2180

Attachment

Proposed Telework Site Request for Approval/Comments

The following employee, _____ has requested to telework from the _____ Office, for which you are the office manager.

In order to evaluate approving or disapproving this request, I am requesting your input on the following:

- Do you have adequate office space in which the employee may perform his/her duties while teleworking? (yes or no) _____
- What type of office equipment would be required in order to accommodate this request? (Desk, Chair, Phone, etc) _____

- Are there any reasons/concerns that would prevent you from approving to this employee working from your location? (If you answer, "yes", please explain) _____

_____ **Approve Request** _____ **Disapprove Request**

Office Manager's Signature: _____

Date: _____

_____ **Approve Request** _____ **Disapprove Request (provide explanation)**

ASTC-FO Signature: _____

Date: _____