



EMPLOYEE MANUAL	
Title: FLEXIBLE WORKPLACE PROGRAM (FWP)	
Policy No.: 40.0	Section Nos. 40.0 – 40.4
Approval Date: December 6, 2022	Effective Date: January 1, 2023
Approved By: Board of Directors	

40.0 PURPOSE

To establish and define the requirements and procedures for the Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency Flexible Workplace Program (FWP). This policy applies to all active employees regardless of full-time or part-time classification.

This policy excludes reasonable accommodation efforts for employees that may need accommodation due to a covered disability. The Agency will use the interactive process to reach a reasonable accommodation in those instances.

The FWP is intended to:

- Support employee work/life balance
- Reduce the workforce carbon footprint by allowing employees to reduce trips
- Decrease traffic congestion by allowing employees to travel during non-peak hours
- Increase employee job satisfaction
- Attract and retain employees
- Protect employee health and safety and reduce the risk of exposure to communicable disease and illness, when necessary
- Allow for continuity of Agency services in the event of an emergency
- Be approved on a case-by case basis depending on organizational priorities
- Not increase any already budgeted personnel costs

40.1 Eligibility

The FWP is not suitable for all employees and/or positions. The General Manager or his/her designee has the discretion, with input from an employee’s supervisor, Manager, and Department Director, to determine the positions eligible to participate in the FWP and the number of hours of participation on a weekly basis.

- a) Each position must be identified as FWP capable in the Flexible Workplace Position Eligibility List, which list will determine if the essential functions of the position are successfully achievable through the FWP.
- b) The decision of the General Manager as to eligibility is final and is not subject to grievance or appeal.
- c) Not every applicant for the FWP will be approved.
- d) The Agency has no obligation to allow one position to participate in the FWP merely because another position who performs similar job duties has been approved to participate in the FWP. The General Manager may override the Flexible Workplace Position Eligibility List on a case-by-case basis.
- e) The General Manager may or may not disclose the specific criteria used to determine Approval or Denial of an Application. Therefore, the employee should only expect to receive communication of an Approval or Denial by the General Manager.



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- f) Positions chiefly focused on fieldwork or that are directly customer facing may not be compatible with the FWP. However, efforts may be made to evaluate whether a portion of an employee’s work duties that are compatible to be done away from the designated work location can be scheduled as part of the FWP.
- g) An Alternate Worksite is defined as a primary residence and does not include a commercial location that has a shared workspace or work done while on non-official travel.
- h) The Department Director will consider the following criteria in determining whether to recommend approval of a specific FWP Application:
 - 1) The employee’s overall rating on their last performance evaluation;
 - 2) The employee is not eligible if the employee is on a performance improvement plan (PIP) or has had disciplinary action in the last twelve (12) months;
 - 3) Has or will have arranged for child/dependent care as necessary for the hours in which the employee works from the Alternate Worksite;
 - 4) Whether the employee’s job duties can be performed away from the Agency worksite and consideration of face-to-face interactions with other Agency employees and the public that the employee’s position requires;
 - 5) The ability to measure the employee’s work performance from a location separate from their worksite;
 - 6) Whether the employee can reliably provide alternative workspace;
 - 7) Whether the employee’s absence from the primary work site will disrupt the workflow of other employees and/or overall management of the Agency or diminish the quantity or quality of the work performed;
 - 8) Whether the employee has adequate technical skills, technology equipment such as monitors, printers, scanners, and other tools needed to perform the duties, and internet and telecommunications capabilities to perform job requirements;
 - 9) The employee’s supervisory responsibilities;
 - 10) The employee’s need for supervision;
 - 11) Other considerations deemed necessary and appropriate by the employee’s immediate supervisor, Department Director, the General Manager and his/her designee;
 - 12) Whether the employee’s participation in the FWP serves the stated intention and purpose of the FWP.

40.2 Policy

- a) The FWP will allow employees to voluntarily enter into an agreement to schedule portions of their work week away from their regular worksite. Participating



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employees will work a full workday, but the FWP will allow times and number of hours in the office to be scheduled differently between individual days of the week.

- b) The General Manager, or his/her designee, must approve all FWP Applications.
- c) A FWP schedule must be consistent, approved before it commences, and shall be combined with days and hours worked at the worksite.
- d) Under special circumstances or in the event of an emergency, employees who are able to work a majority or all of their scheduled hours remotely may be required to do so.
- e) FWP employees will work the equivalent of two (2) days out of the work week from their Agency worksite, as approved by the General Manager through the FWP application process.
- f) Participation in a FWP does not change or in any manner alter an employee's duties, obligations, responsibilities, or conditions of employment, or impact an employee's salary, retirement, benefits, and Agency insurance coverage.
- g) Expenses incurred as a result of participating in the FWP will not be reimbursed by the Agency unless they are normally reimbursable pursuant to Agency policies. Such non-reimbursable expenses include, but are not limited to, utility costs (including internet access), purchase of office equipment or furniture, home improvements, any construction, any alterations to real or personal property, and travel to and from the primary Agency worksite if required to be onsite.
- h) Employees remain obligated to comply with all State and Federal rules, policies, regulations, procedures, and practices.
- i) The FWP shall be entirely voluntary and the program as a whole and/or an employee's participation in the FWP may be suspended, canceled, amended or discontinued by the Agency at any time, at the Agency's sole discretion. An employee may cease participation in the FWP upon reasonable request. Termination of an employee's participation in the FWP by the Agency is administrative and final, not subject to grievance or appeal.
- j) The FWP shall be a cooperative effort between the employee and the Agency. Participation in the program is a privilege and not a right or an entitlement.



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40.3 Acknowledgements

In order to participate in the FWP, employees will be required to acknowledge and agree to the following:

- a) The FWP and participation therein is subject to the discretion of the Agency, and participation in the program will be determined consistent with the eligibility criteria above.
- b) Non-exempt employees who are eligible for overtime shall document their work schedule in the Application, including rest and meal breaks (“Work Schedule”). Any deviation from the Work Schedule must be approved in advance, in writing, by management. Non-exempt employees must take meal and rest breaks while on the FWP, just as they would if they were reporting to work at their Agency worksite. Non-exempt employees may not work outside their normal work hours without prior written authorization from their supervisor. A non-exempt employee who fails to secure written authorization before working outside his or her normal work hours may face discipline in accordance with the Agency’s policy for working unauthorized overtime.
- c) FWP employees are required to be accessible in the same manner as if they are working at their Agency worksite during the established Work Schedule, regardless of the designated location for working, or Alternate Worksite. Employees must be accessible via telephone, email, and/or network access to their supervisor and other Agency employees while working off-site, as if working at their Agency worksite. Employees shall check their Agency-related business phone messages and emails on a consistent basis and respond accordingly, as if working at their Agency worksite. At the request of the Agency, Employees will need to be able return to the worksite within two hours.
- d) Employees while on the FWP, may be required to attend all-staff meetings or other Agency events, regardless of their FWP work schedule.
- e) Employees shall work their regular schedule (full-time or part-time basis), according to the Work Schedule.
- f) Employees are required to maintain an accurate record of all hours worked and submit their hours in accordance with normal Agency procedures while working at the Alternate Worksite.
- g) While on the FWP, employees shall:
 - 1) Be available to the Agency via telephone and/or email during all designated work hours.
 - 2) Maintain their Alternate Worksite free from distractions.
 - 3) Have reliable and secure internet and/or wireless access.
 - 4) Obtain advance approval for all periods of unavailability from management in accordance with department policy and documented on the appropriate leave of absence notice.



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- 5) Ensure dependent care will not interfere with work responsibilities.
- 6) Notify their supervisor promptly when unable to perform work assignments because of equipment failure or other unforeseen circumstances.
- 7) Agency has provided Agency owned equipment and agree to follow the Agency’s Use of Technology policy for the use of such equipment. Employees will immediately report to their supervisor any loss, damage, or unauthorized access to Agency owned equipment immediately upon discovery of such loss, damage, or unauthorized access.

40.4 General Duties, Obligations and Responsibilities

Employees are required, as a condition of initial approval and continued participation in the FWP to agree and adhere to the provisions and terms set forth herein, including the following:

- a) FWP employees are required to abide by all Agency policies and procedures, rules and regulations and all other official Agency documents and directives.
- b) FWP employees must meet the same standards of performance and professionalism expected of Agency employees in terms of job responsibilities, work product, timeliness of assignments, and contact with other Agency employees and the public.
- c) FWP employees must ensure that all official Agency documents are retained and maintained according to the normal operating procedures in the same manner as if working at an Agency worksite.
- d) FWP employees will be completely responsible for costs associated with the use of their own cellular equipment, including energy, data or maintenance costs, network costs, home maintenance, home workspace furniture, ergonomic equipment, liability for third party claims, or any other incidental costs (e.g., utilities associated with the employee’s Alternate Worksite).
- e) FWP employees may receive access to a virtual private network (“VPN”), as approved by the Information Technology Department. Printers connected to the Agency equipment via WIFI are prohibited. Printers connected via a printer cable that is connected to the printer and Agency equipment are allowed.
- f) FWP employees must continue to abide by practices, policies and procedures for requesting sick, vacation and other leaves of absences. Requests to work overtime, declare vacation or take other time off from work must be pre-approved in writing by each employee’s supervisor. If an employee becomes ill while working at the Alternate Worksite, they shall notify their supervisor immediately and record on their timesheet any hours not worked due to incapacitation.



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- g) FWP employees will take precautions to ensure Agency devices (e.g., computers, laptops, tablets, smart phones, etc.) are secure before connecting remotely to the Agency’s network and must close or secure all connections to Agency desktop or system resources (e.g., remote desktop, VPN connections, etc.) when not conducting work for the Agency (Employees will disconnect from VPN when not in use). Employees will not allow anyone else in the household to use Agency issued devices. Employees will adhere to Agency directed patching schedules whether equipment is at home or at work (Agency laptops must be kept powered up and online during patching/updates).
- h) FWP employees must exercise the same precautions to safeguard electronic and paper information, protect confidentiality, and adhere to the Agency’s records retention policies, especially as it pertains to the Public Records Act. Employees, as if they were at an Agency worksite, must safeguard all sensitive and confidential information (both on paper and in electronic form) relating to Agency work they access from the Alternate Worksite or transport from their Agency worksite to the Alternate Worksite. Employees must also take reasonable precautions to prevent third parties from accessing or handling any sensitive and confidential information they access from the Alternate Worksite or transport from their Agency worksite to the Alternate Worksite. Employees must return all records, documents, and correspondence to the Agency at the termination of the FWP Agreement or upon request by their supervisor, department Director or Human Resources Department.
- i) FWP employees’ wages and benefits will be the same as if they were continuing to work at an Agency worksite. Workers’ Compensation benefits will apply only to injuries occurring at an Alternate Worksite which arise out of and in the course of employment as defined by Workers’ Compensation law. Employees must report any such work-related injuries to their supervisor immediately. The Agency shall not be responsible for injuries or property damage unrelated to such work activities, including injuries to third persons when said injuries occur at the Alternate Worksite.
- j) FWP employees’ existing supervisory relationships, lines of authority and supervisory practices remain in effect. Prior to the approval of participation in the FWP, supervisors and employees shall agree upon a reasonable set of goals and objectives to be accomplished by the employees. Supervisors shall use reasonable means to ensure that timelines are adhered to and that goals and objectives are achieved.
- k) Any breach of the FWP Agreement by the employee may result in termination of the Agreement and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.