

Disconnecting from Work

Procedure #: HR.2-08-001

Policy Number: HR.2-08

Sub-Topic: Hours of Work & Overtime

Topic: Employee Attraction and Retention

Applies to: All Employees

Purpose

This procedure supports Disconnecting from Work Policy # HR.2-08 (the “Policy”). It outlines the steps for the Employee and the Employer to take for ensuring employees maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Procedure

To build a culture where employees feel supported to disconnect from work-related communication, it is important to recognize that everyone has obligations, and a joint approach is required.

Employee Responsibilities

- 1) Adhere to the scheduled hours of work related to their position.
- 2) Act in accordance with Telephone and Email Service Standards as available on the employee intranet (Town Central).
- 3) Update their working status through Microsoft Outlook, including out-of-office notifications and being “online” during scheduled hours of work.
- 4) Update telephone voicemail recordings for contacts to leave a message that includes hours of availability.
- 5) Respect other employees’ ability to disconnect by not routinely expecting work-related contact outside of their scheduled hours of work, subject to corporate business and/or operational needs, and the duties and obligations of the sender and recipient’s positions. Consider delaying the delivering of emails until the regular work day commences, when possible. Email messages can be programmed to be time delayed and delivered on the next business day.
- 6) Keep informed of emerging situations that may require attention after scheduled hours of work.
- 7) Be mindful of co-workers’, customers/clients’, vendors’ and other third parties’ working hours.
- 8) Obtain prior approval from their immediate supervisor/manager for unscheduled overtime work.
- 9) Comply with all other corporate policies impacting performance, hours of work and remuneration in meeting municipal operational, business and/or service delivery needs.
- 10) Discuss situations with their immediate supervisor/manager or Human Resources where the application or compliance with this Policy may be in question.

- 11) Take applicable meal, rest periods and hours free from work as required by law, contract and/or applicable collective agreement.
- 12) Take vacation or other leave entitlements as required by law, contract and/or applicable collective agreement.

Employer Responsibilities

Commissioners/Directors/Managers/Supervisors

- 1) Lead by example. Respect and support employees with their ability to disconnect outside of scheduled hours of work and discuss best practices to support this ability.
- 2) Ensure employees are aware of Department or Business Unit specific expectations for communicating with each other.
- 3) Communicate and discuss the expectations of this Policy with employees during team meetings.
- 4) Encourage employees to discuss situations where compliance with this Policy may be impacting their work life balance.
- 5) Use communication channels appropriately during scheduled hours of work to disseminate information and communicate with employees.
- 6) If preparing emails or scheduling meetings outside of scheduled hours or work, consider using the "Delay Delivery" option as a technique provided through Microsoft Outlook to send a prepared email during scheduled hours of work.
- 7) Ensure employees take meal breaks and rest periods from work required by law, contract and/or applicable collective agreement.
- 8) Encourage and support employees to take vacation or other leave entitlements as required by law, contract and/or applicable collective agreement.

Human Resources Department

- 1) Provide interpretation and guidance in relation to the Policy and this Procedure and applicable legislation.
- 2) Provide support and problem solving to employees experiencing challenges disconnecting from work.
- 3) Provide a copy of the Policy and Procedure to all employees no later than 30 days following its effective date.
- 4) Provide a copy of the revised Policy to all employees if changes have been made no later than 30 days following its revised effective date.
- 5) Provide a copy of the Policy and Procedure to a new employee no later than 30 days from the day the employee commencing employment.
- 6) Retain copies of every written policy on disconnecting from work required by the [Working for Workers Act, 2021](#) under Part VII.0.1 for three years after the policy is no longer in effect.

Cross-References

Corporate Policy

[Alternative Work Arrangements Policy #HR.2-06](#)

Disconnecting from Work Policy #HR.2-08

[Employee Complaint Policy #HR.04-2](#)

[Harassment & Discrimination Free Workplace Policy #HR.13-04](#)

[Overtime Policy #HR.2-02](#)

[Standby & Call-Out Duty Policy #HR.2-03](#)

[Wellness Policy #HR.8-07](#)

Other Government Legislation

[Employment Standards Act \(Ontario Regulation 285/01: When Work Deemed to be Performed\)](#)

[Working for Workers Act, 2021-Bill 27](#)

Contact

Human Resources Department or at hr@newmarket.ca

Details

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