

WORK FROM HOME - COVID 19 POLICY

2021/22

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1. Policy brief, purpose and background

Ngqushwa Local Municipality intends from 3rd quarter of 2020/2021 financial year adopt a risk based, balanced response concerning return-to-office (RTO) after the adjusted alert level 3 lockdown announced by the President of the Republic of South Africa on the 29th December 2020.

A balance between the Health & Safety of employees and the operation of the business must be maintained; therefore, all employees are reminded that they are expected to be available and engaged in work, during operating business hours.

This document provides guiding principles that must be employed at Ngqushwa Local Municipality to ensure a safe Return to Office following the COVID-19 South African adjusted alert level 3. The guiding principles address means to minimize possible exposure and spreading of the virus on all Municipal facilities, isolation and quarantine protocols. In addition, it addresses other applicable Ngqushwa Local Municipality processes necessary to minimize business interruption.

This policy includes measurements to mitigate the spread of corona virus. All employees are requested to follow all the rules diligently, to sustain a healthy and safe workplace in this unique environment. It's important that all respond responsibly and transparently to these health precautions, Ngqushwa Local Municipality assures that it will strive to always treat employee's private health and personal data with high confidentiality and sensitivity.

This corona virus (COVID-19) work from home policy is susceptible to changes with the introduction of additional governmental guidelines.

2. Scope

The policy applies to all of employees who physically work in Ngqushwa Local Municipality office(s).

3. Definitions

Home working is about using the employee's home as a base for work instead of the employee coming into a workplace.

Working at home is not an employee right or benefit and may be discontinued by the municipality for any business reason, at any time. Employees will be permitted to work at home at the discretion of the municipality.

4. Work-At-Home Criteria

To be eligible to work at home, employees must, among other things: (1) should be persons aged 60 years and above, those with underlying serious medical condition/s and other occupational levels as determined by the Accounting Officer ;(2) have a work site and equipment (telephone, Internet, supplies, etc.) suitable for working at home; and (3) be able to work independently and productively.

Some positions, responsibilities and projects are more suitable for working from home than others and may be appropriate to maintain the operations continuity in the event of an emergency, or as part of a flexible work arrangement. Also, responsibilities that do not require face-to-face interaction, require minimal supervision, involve the extensive use of computers and/or telephones, and have clearly defined and easily measurable tasks are more appropriate for a work-at-home arrangement.

~~Upon delegation by Accounting Officer responsible Directors/Line Managers/Supervisors,~~
~~must examine the distinct activities, functions and tasks to determine whether a work-at-~~
home arrangement is appropriate.

5. Policy elements

Below are the required actions that employees should take to protect themselves and their co-workers from a potential corona virus infection.

5.1 Sick leave arrangements:

- If an employee has cold symptoms, such as cough/sneezing/fever, or feels poorly, request sick leave or work from home.
- If an employee has a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, such an employee can return to the office only after fully recovered, with a doctor's note confirming your recovery.

5.2 Work from home requests/arrangements:

- If an employee is feeling ill, but are able to work, he/she can request to work from home.
- Older employees and those that present with co-morbidities are expected to submit evidential documentation to the employer.

- The decision to allow remote working, must take due consideration of the service delivery needs of the department and organisation.
- Employees working from home may from time to time required to attend the workplace, among others, receive instructions, documentation, access to office infrastructure and to submit completed tasks.
- Work from home strategy is adopted and in line with the risk register of the institution and plead by President of the Republic.
- If an employee has recently returned from areas with a high number of COVID-19 cases, the employer will ask him/her to work from home for 14 calendar days, and return to the office only if he/she is fully asymptomatic. The employee will also be asked not to come into physical contact with any colleagues during this time.
- If the employee has been in close contact with someone infected by COVID-19, with high chances of being infected, request for work from home must be submitted. The employee will also be asked not to come into physical contact with any colleagues during this time.
- The employee must complete a pre –approval form before resuming work from home and it is his/her responsibility to ensure approval is granted.
- Employees who abuse the work from home policy by submitting misleading information will be in contravention of the municipal code of conduct.
- It is important for employees working at home to be available during working hours and; as and when needed by their superiors failing which the employee will be deemed to have acted inappropriately and against the code of conduct and policies of the municipality.

6. Phased and staggered approach to be followed –

Departmental Heads must develop a phased and staggered approach for employees returning to office for areas they are responsible for. Considerations for the plans must include:

- Working from home of non-core employees and those who can work from home must be extended as far as possible (until Lock Down is completely lifted and even beyond Lock Down) depending on medical advice by municipal doctor.
- Returning to office in batches of 1/3
- Introduce shift system and develop rotational plans
- Reduce the number of days in the office
- Limit the number of employees arriving; leaving or working at the same time, the Director must consider amending working times to minimize the risk associated with the simultaneous arrival and departure of employees.

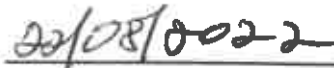
7. Travelling/Commuting measures:

- All work trips and events – both domestic and international – will be cancelled/postponed until further notice.
- In-person meetings should be done virtually where possible, especially with non-municipal parties (e.g. candidate interviews, disciplinary hearings etc).
- If an employee is planning to travel voluntarily to a high-risk province/country with increased COVID-19 cases, they'll be asked to work from home for 6 calendar days.
- Employees will also be asked not to come into physical contact with any colleagues during this time.


This policy is adopted and approved by the full Ngqushwa Local Municipality Council for Implementation



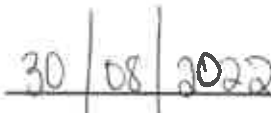
MUNICIPAL MANAGER



DATE



MAYOR



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