



EMPLOYMENT POLICY MANUAL

Subject: Disconnect from Work	Approval Date: May 16 th , 2022	By-Law No. 47-2022
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3.45 DISCONNECT FROM WORK

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Corporation of the Municipality of Red Lake (further referred to as the Organization) values the health and well-being of employees. Disconnecting from work at appropriate times is vital for a person's well-being and sustaining a healthy work-life balance. This "Disconnecting from Work Policy" (further referred to as policy) supports each employee in disconnecting from work outside of their normal working hours, subject to reasonable exceptions.

This policy will be governed by and interpreted in accordance with all applicable legislation, including (but not limited to) Ontario's Employment Standards Act, 2000 and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the Organization's support for employees to disconnect from work when appropriate to assist in achieving a healthy work-life balance, regardless of whether employees are working in the workplace, remotely, or in a flexible working arrangement.

Due to the evolving nature of the Organization's business, the Organization may amend this policy as it deems appropriate.

2. DEFINITIONS

"Disconnecting from Work" under this policy means not engaging in work-related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls or the sending or reviewing of other messages, so as to be free from the performance of work.

3. ORGANIZATION, MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISOR, AND EMPLOYEE OBLIGATIONS

The Organization, its management and employees must work together to ensure that everyone is able to disconnect from work outside of normal working hours in accordance with this policy.

3.1 Organization Obligations

- a) To provide new employees with a copy of this policy within 30 days of the employee's start date.



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- b) To review and amend this policy as often as may be required.
- c) To Provide existing employees with a copy of any amended versions of the policy within 30 days of the amendment.
- d) To Provide employees with information regarding their normal hours of work; given the nature of their work; and any other information required to assist employees with complying with this policy.
- e) To take all reasonable steps to ensure that all employees are able to disconnect from the workplace at appropriate times as detailed in this policy; and
- f) To refrain from penalizing or taking any other reprisal action against employees who have questions regarding this policy or request compliance with it. Legitimate employer direction and/or corrective action towards employees is not considered “reprisal action.”

3.2 Management and Supervisor Obligations

- a) To take all reasonable steps to ensure that the employees under their management or supervision are able to disconnect from work outside of their normal hours of work in accordance with this policy.
- b) To try to resolve any employee concerns about this policy.
- c) To advise employees of the limited instances in which they may be expected to perform work outside of their normal hours of work; and
- d) To refrain from penalizing or taking any other reprisal action against employees who have questions regarding this policy or request compliance with it. Legitimate management or supervisor direction and/or corrective action towards employees is not considered “reprisal action”

3.3 Employee Obligations

- a) Take all reasonable steps to ensure that they engage in work-related communications during their normal working hours.
- b) To fully cooperate with any time recording methods which the Organization uses to track hours of work.
- c) To take all reasonable steps to ensure that their colleagues are able to disconnect from work in accordance with this policy; and



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- d) To notify their supervisor if they feel undue pressure to work or respond to work-related communications outside of their normal working hours, or if they are otherwise unable to comply with this policy.

4. WORKING HOURS

While employees working hours will vary within the Organization, each employee's hours of work are defined by past practice, their employment contract and/or by agreement with their supervisor.

If you have any questions regarding your normal hours of work, please consult with your supervisor.

It is generally expected that all employees are able to complete their work, including reviewing and responding to any work-related communication, during their normal hours of work. The Organization has no expectation that employees engage in work-related communications outside of their normal hours of work, subject to the exceptions detailed below.

If you are regularly unable to complete your work or attend work-related communications within your normal hours of work, please notify your supervisor.

5. EXCEPTIONS

There are situations when it is necessary for employees to perform work or communicate with colleagues outside of their normal hours of work, including, but not limited to the following:

- Where an emergency or exigent circumstances arise, with or without notice.
- To assist or fill in at short notice for a colleague.
- Where the nature of the employee's duties requires work and/or work-related communications outside of their normal hours of work.
- Unforeseeable business or operational reasons.
- An employee's request or agreement to work certain hours or have flexible working hours; and
- Other unusual circumstances as your manager or supervisor may advise or which are inherent to your position.



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6. MEETINGS, CALLS, AND WORK-RELATED COMMUNICATIONS

Employees should make all reasonable efforts to book meetings and calls during the attendees' normal hours of work, subject to the exceptions detailed above. Similarly, employees should only review and send work-related communication during their normal working hours, subject to the exceptions detailed above.

Work-related communications should not be sent to or from employees' personal mobile phones, personal e-mail addresses, personal telephone numbers or other personal devices, subject to the exceptions detailed above or an agreement to communicate in this manner.

Some employee's hours of work may differ within the Organization. As a result, certain employees may attend to work-related communications outside of other employees' normal hours of work. Where this is the case, the sender should consider the timing of their communications and understand that the recipient will not be expected to respond until their return to work at the earliest. The sender should also consider all appropriate safeguards on the employees' normal hours of work, including but not limited to the following:

- Using the "Delay Delivery" function for e-mail messages in Microsoft Outlook so that their message is sent during regular business hours; and
- Including a line in their e-mail signature as follows: "I am sending you this email now because it is convenient for me. I do not expect you to respond to it outside of your normal hours of work."

7. AUTOMATIC REPLIES

Employees are required to activate an automatic e-mail response whenever taking vacation or a leave from work. This automatic response should be sent automatically in response to all e-mail communications and advise the sender that the recipient is absent from work. The response should include the start and end date of the recipient's absence and provide an alternative contact's information. The automatic response should be active for at least the duration of the employee's absence from work.

Employees may also be required to activate an automatic e-mail response at the end of their normal working day. If applicable, this automatic response should advise the sender of the recipient's normal hours of work and any other relevant information.



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8. HANDHELD AND REMOTE WORK DEVICES

The Organization may provide some employees with handheld devices, such as a mobile phone, laptop, or other device to assist with working remotely. These devices are provided to employees to encourage flexibility in completing their work. Possession of these devices does not mean that an employee is expected to make themselves available for work or work-related communications outside of their normal working hours.

9. QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

Employees should consult with their supervisor if they have any questions or concerns about this policy. If any question or concern regarding this policy cannot be resolved with an employee's supervisor, the matter should be raised with the Organization's Human Resources Department.

10. EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I have read the "Disconnecting from Work Policy" set forth above. I understand its contents, agree to abide by it, and acknowledge that the policy forms part of my contract of employment. I also agree to seek clarification from my supervisor regarding and aspect of the policy on which I am unclear.

Employee Name: _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____