


POLICY

	Policy:	Work at Home in the Event of an Emergency		
	Department:	Office of the CAO		
	Division:	Human Resources Division	By-Law No.:	2024-083
	Administered By:	Manager of Human Resources	Approval Date:	Dec. 16, 2024
	Replaces:	Work at Home in the Event of an Emergency – March 16, 2020		
	Attachment(s):	<i>Working at Home General Safety Guidelines</i>		

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1. The Corporation of the Town of Amherstburg has a role to play in preparing for, responding to and recovering from an emergency situation, such as a pandemic. Employees who have the capability of working at home may be asked to work at home during a declared emergency or as requested by the Mayor of the Town of Amherstburg during a crisis situation.
- 1.2. This declaration is based on a situation or an impending situation that threatens public safety, public health, the environment, critical infrastructure, property, and/or economic stability and exceeds the scope of routine community activity. The Mayor may direct employees to work at home if it is felt an emergency situation is pending, prior to an official declaration is authorized.
- 1.3. The Mayor of the Corporation of the Town of Amherstburg, or the Premier of Ontario may declare a municipal emergency terminated at any time. Upon termination of a municipal emergency, the Mayor, designated alternate, or designate(s) will be responsible for notifying by whatever means available, all affected agencies and personnel.
 - 1.3.1. Prior to declaring a municipal emergency, the Mayor or his/her Designated Alternate may consult with the Medical Officer of Health, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Senior Management Team (SMT) or other stakeholders as deemed appropriate to determine whether or not an emergency exists and if so, this “state of emergency” will be communicated as a “Declared Emergency” in the form of a signed declaration made in writing. This signed declaration will be forwarded to the Premier of Ontario or the Solicitor General of Ontario (Provincial Emergency Operations Centre PEOC) or designated alternate in accordance with the Ontario Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act. The Mayor or designated alternate may officially declare an emergency to exist, and may designate any municipal area as an emergency area. If an emergency is declared, it may be done before, during or after activation of the Emergency Response Plan.
- 1.4. Clear direction will be given to Town employees who have been directed to work at home during a declaration of an emergency or any other significant crisis as warranted by the Mayor.

2. **PURPOSE**

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to minimize serious illness and societal disruption in the event of an emergency and is temporary in nature. Effective, timely, regular and accessible communication to all Town employees, in conjunction with coordination of emergency response team efforts would continue in an effort to provide effective delivery of Town services designated as 'essential services' when a mayoral declared emergency situation arises.
- 2.2. This policy has been developed in accordance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* guidelines, the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the legislative requirements of the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Board Act (WSIB)*.
 - 2.2.1. The *Ontario Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHS)* does not apply to "persons working at home," and therefore does not apply, legally, under this policy.

3. **SCOPE**

- 3.1. This policy applies to all Town of Amherstburg employees who have been directed by their supervisor to work at home due to a declaration of a pandemic or other emergency situation.
- 3.2. The policy application may be limited based on availability of Town resources, including but not limited to human resources, equipment and supplies.
- 3.3. This policy shall be reviewed every five (5) years from the date it becomes effective, and/or sooner at the discretion of the CAO or designate.

4. **DEFINITIONS**

- 4.1. **Designated Employees** refers to employees who have been directed to work at home by their supervisor.

Common definitions, acronyms, and terms are available in the Glossary located on the Town's Policies webpage.

5. **INTERPRETATIONS**

- 5.1. Any reference in this policy to any statute or any section of a statute shall, unless expressly stated, be deemed to be reference to the statute as amended, restated or re-enacted from time to time. Any references to a by-law or Town policy shall be deemed to be a reference to the most recent passed policy or by-law and any replacements thereto.
- 5.2. References to the CAO and SMT may include designated individuals, as appropriate.

6. GENERAL CONDITIONS

6.1. **Work at Home Assignments**

6.1.1. Employees who are directed by the Corporation to work at home under this policy will:

6.1.1.1. Be provided clear direction from their supervisor in relation to work assignments, duties, deadlines, etc. to be completed during the work at home period.

6.1.1.2. Perform work in a suitable space and maintains confidentiality and security of municipal records and information.

6.2. **Provision of Resources**

6.2.1. Employees who are directed by the Corporation to work at home under this policy will be supplied with the necessary supplies and equipment, as determined by their supervisor, as soon it can be practicably obtained through the Information Technology.

6.2.2. Employees will ensure that all equipment and supplies provided by the Corporation to facilitate their work at home is to be returned to their supervisor immediately upon their return to work, once the employee is no longer required to work at home.

6.3. **Notice to Affected Areas**

6.3.1. Information related to who has been directed to work at home during an emergency situation will be communicated to Human Resources and Information Technology.

6.4. **Reporting**

6.4.1. Employees working at home will log their daily activity in an email to be sent to their supervisor at the end of each work day.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1. **Council** has the authority and responsibility to:

7.1.1. Support the *Work from Home in the Event of an Emergency Policy*.

7.1.2. Provide the necessary financial resources to carry out the intent of this policy.

7.2. **Supervisors** has the authority and responsibility to:

7.2.1. Monitor the work of an employee who is working at home, as they would with other employees

7.2.2. Address any performance issues, including productivity, as they would with any other employee

7.2.3. Be aware of their respective roles and responsibilities as outlined in both this policy and the Corporation of the Town of Amherstburg Pandemic Plan.

7.3. The **Manager of Human Resources** has the authority and responsibility to:

7.3.1. Ensure this Policy is reviewed annually or more frequently as may be required, such as in the event of changes to applicable legislation or issues identified as the result of emergency drills or other eventualities.

7.3.2. Communicate this policy and related procedures, protocols and guidelines.

7.3.3. Ensure regular communication amongst all affected persons is maintained to the extent possible given the nature of the emergency and circumstances, which may affect the ability to communicate effectively.

7.3.3.1. The frequency and scheduling of said communications may be determined prior to an emergency being declared, or modified as may be identified or required before or during an emergency. Land lines (telephones), faxes, e-mails, hard copy documentation, cell phones, hand held portable 2 way radios, radio broadcasts or other means of communication as may be applicable in the circumstances should be considered. Employees are encouraged to contact 211 during an emergency situation for updated information and guidance.

7.3.4. Adhere to the reporting requirements of the *Workplace Safety & Insurance Board Act* (WSIB) in the event of a work related accident sustained by a person who works at home as a result of the implementation of this policy.

7.4. The **Manager of Information Technology** has the authority and responsibility to:

7.4.1. Establish the rules for modem connections to ensure adequate security.

7.4.2. Ensure equipment is capable of accessing pertinent files and information from a remote location.

7.4.3. Issue and track the equipment used by employees while working at home.

7.5. **Employees working from home** have the responsibility to:

7.5.1. Be aware of their respective roles and responsibilities as outlined in both this policy and the Corporation of the Town of Amherstburg Pandemic Plan.

7.5.1.1. Additional roles and responsibilities will be at the direction and discretion of Provincial and Federal agencies and authorities in the event of a Provincial or Federal Emergency Declaration.

7.5.2. Work at home the regular hours normally performed while at the workplace and take breaks and lunch as normal.

7.5.3. Log daily activity in an email and send it to their supervisor at the end of each work day.

7.5.4. Follow, to the best of their ability, the tenets of related Health and Safety Guidelines as produced by agencies such as the Ontario Ministry of Labour and associated Safe Work Agencies.

7.5.4.1. Compliance with these guidelines during such a crisis as a pandemic, as they apply to persons working at home, is voluntary and self-regulating from a purely legislative perspective. Persons working at home on behalf of the Town of Amherstburg fall outside the purview of the Ontario Ministry of Labour (MOL) from an enforcement perspective.

8. REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

- 8.1. Occupational Health and Safety Guidelines as may be produced by the *Ontario Ministry of Labour*.
- 8.2. *Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*.
- 8.3. *Ontario Employment Standards Act*.
- 8.4. *Ontario Human Rights Act*.
- 8.5. *The Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- 8.6. Collective Agreements negotiated between the Town of Amherstburg and any of its local unions or associations.
- 8.7. Municipal Pandemic Plan Policy and applicable Emergency Preparedness Policies.
- 8.8. Any additional Emergency Response or similar Guidelines as may be made available at the time of, or produced during an emergency event, such as a pandemic.
- 8.9. *Working at Home General Safety Guidelines*.
- 8.10. *Code of Conduct for Employees/Staff*