

Category: Human Resources

Title: Hours of Work and Disconnecting from Work – HRM-200

Policy Number: HRM-200

Approved by: CW267-2022

Administered by: Corporate Support Services, Human Resources

Effective: June 1, 2022

1. Background

Disconnecting from Work is vital to help us achieve a healthy and sustainable work-life balance and prevent burnout. The health and well-being of our employees are of the utmost importance and we encourage and support all team members to prioritize their well-being.

The City encourages employees to disconnect outside of their Scheduled Work Hours and enjoy time away from work.

Scheduled Work Hours may vary by Department, Division and/or Section, based on the unique services provided to the community and clients. Hours of work are established in accordance with the City's Policies and with the [Employment Standards Act 2000 \(ESA\)](#).

2. Purpose

This Policy encourages and supports employees in balancing their work and personal lives and ensures compliance with the [Employment Standards Act 2000 \(ESA\)](#).

3. Application and Scope

This Council Policy applies to all City of Brampton employees (including, but not limited to, students, and volunteers). Unionized employees should refer to their Collective Agreement for additional details.

4. Exceptions

4.1 Where communication is required by the terms of a Collective Agreement and/or Employment Agreement/Terms and Conditions of Employment;

4.2 There may be a requirement for employees to work or communicate outside of their Scheduled Work Hours due to emergency or unforeseen

circumstances where the nature of the employee's duties requires work and/or work-related communications outside of their Scheduled Work Hours;

- 4.3 Unforeseeable business or operational reasons;
- 4.4 An employee's request or agreement to work certain hours or have flexible working hours; and
- 4.5 Other unusual circumstances as your supervisor may advise or which are inherent to your position.

5. Outcomes

- 5.1 A psychologically safe work environment that is supportive of employee health and well-being and recognizes the need for employees to be able to manage the demands of work, family, and personal life to prevent burnout.
- 5.2 An organizational culture that encourages employee engagement and connection while respecting the ability to disconnect from work outside of Scheduled Work Hours.
- 5.3 An inclusive and diverse workforce where potential barriers to employment or advancement are minimized.
- 5.4 A culture of compliance where the City and Employees meet the [Employment Standards Act 2000 \(ESA\)](#) requirements and support one another to achieve a healthy work-life balance.

6. Principles

- 6.1 **Employee health and well-being** – support balance in employees' personal and professional priorities and foster a healthy workplace culture.
- 6.2 **Talent attraction and retention** – attract prospective candidates and strengthen the engagement of existing employees.
- 6.3 **Diversity and inclusion** – minimize some potential barriers to employment or advancement.

7. Policy Statements

- 7.1 General

7.1.1 Employees are encouraged to disconnect from work outside of Scheduled Work Hours.

7.1.2 Employees will not be penalized for refusing to attend to work matters outside of their Scheduled Work Hours, subject to the exceptions set out in this policy.

7.1.3 All employees should support the ability of others to disconnect.

7.2 Communications

7.2.1 When possible, email should be checked or sent, and phone calls made, during Scheduled Work Hours.

7.2.2 Due to varied shifts and flexible work arrangements, some employees may send communications at times that are outside of others' Scheduled Work Hours.

7.2.3 Where communication is sent outside Scheduled Work Hours, a statement should be included allaying the expectation of an immediate response.

7.2.4 Supervisors should have a supportive conversation with team members that are communicating outside of Scheduled Work Hours, as this may be a sign that they are finding it difficult to manage their workload or disconnect.

7.2.5 Consider using the "Delay Delivery" function for e-mail messages in Microsoft Outlook so that their message is sent during regular working hours.

7.2.6 Consider 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."

7.2.7 Consider using an email's subject line to identify the urgency of the email.

7.2.8 Acknowledge the timing of the email and reiterate expectations for a response in the body.

7.3 Meetings

7.3.1 Schedule meetings taking into consideration participants' Scheduled Work Hours.

7.3.2 Try to avoid scheduling meetings during break and lunch periods, where applicable.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 Supervisors

8.1.1 Lead by example by disconnecting and not scheduling meetings or communicating outside of Scheduled Work Hours;

8.1.2 Openly promote disconnecting at the end of the workday as part of our corporate culture;

8.1.3 Respect and encourage your team members' ability to disconnect;

8.1.4 Communicate, with each employee, expectations regarding their Scheduled Work Hours;

8.1.5 Maintain open channels of communication in relation to workload, work-life balance, and time management;

8.1.6 Encourage employees to take their entitled breaks and vacation days and disconnect from work;

8.1.7 Ensure that employees have clear goals and deliverables that can be delivered during their Scheduled Work Hours, except in exceptional circumstances; and

8.1.8 Ensure business continuity is maintained.

8.2 Employees

8.2.1 Manage distractions and non-work-related activities by being conscious of work patterns during their Scheduled Work Hours that

may increase the likelihood that they will decide not to disconnect after their workday;

- 8.2.2 Ensure awareness of their well-being and take remedial action if necessary;
- 8.2.3 Share with their supervisor if they are having trouble maintaining work-life balance or are unable to reasonably balance the demands of work and personal life;
- 8.2.4 Ensure entitled breaks are taken and disconnect on vacation days and paid holidays to prevent burnout and promote well-being;
- 8.2.5 Communicate their Scheduled Work Hours and work-related boundaries to foster a supportive workplace culture;
- 8.2.6 Respect and support everyone's ability to disconnect; and
- 8.2.7 Ensure job responsibilities, work schedule and customer service requirements continue to be met and business continuity is maintained.

8.3 Human Resources

- 8.3.1 Provide support and guidance to employees and supervisors in the application of this Policy.

9. Monitoring and Compliance

- 9.1 The Policy must be reviewed at least once every three years by Human Resources to ensure its effectiveness and to comply with Governing Policy for the Corporate Policy Program and the [Employment Standards Act 2000 \(ESA\)](#).

10. Definitions

- 10.1 **“Disconnecting From Work”** means not engaging in work-related activities, including but not limited to communications - the sending or reviewing of email, text messages, telephone calls, video calls, or other messages - to be free from the performance of work.
- 10.2 **“Employee”** means any of the following:
 - a) a person who performs work or supplies services for monetary compensation;

b) a secondary school student who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a work experience program authorized by the school board that operates the school in which the student is enrolled;

c) a person who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a program approved by a college, university, private career college, or other post-secondary institution; or,

d) such other persons as may be prescribed who perform work or supply services to an employer for no monetary compensation.

10.3 **“Scheduled Work Hours”** means the work hours as outlined in policy and/or Collective Agreements and/or Employment Agreement/Terms and Conditions of Employment.

11. References and Resources

This Policy should be read and applied in conjunction with the following references and resources as updated from time to time. Please note that some of the following documents may not be publicly available.

References and External references

- [Employment Standards Act 2000 \(ESA\)](#)

References to related bylaws, Council policies, and administrative directives

- [Flexible Work Administrative Directive](#)
- [Compensation for Additional Hours Policy](#)
- [Vacation Policy](#)
- [Paid Holidays Policy](#)

References to related corporate-wide procedures, forms, and resources

- Disconnecting from Work Guide

Revision History

Date	Description
2022/06/01	New. Approved by Council Resolution CW267-2022. Replaces Hours of Work Policy AF123-2002.
2025/06/01	Next Scheduled Review (<i>3 years after approval</i>)