

	TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH STORMONT
	Title: Right to Disconnect
	Policy Category: Human Resources Policies
	Effective Date: May 11, 2022
	Revision Date:

Policy Statement

The Township of South Stormont **“the Township”** supports the wellbeing of our employees and recognizes the benefit that comes from disconnecting from work.

Purpose

The Township of South Stormont is adopting this policy regarding disconnecting from work and to encourage employees to enjoy their lives outside of work.

Scope

This policy applies to all Township of South Stormont employees of all work locations unless a separate policy relating to the employee’s position is put into place and is provided to the employee.

Policy

The Township of South Stormont recognizes the value of disconnecting from work. However, there are legitimate situations when it is necessary to contact employees, and for employees to work outside of normal working hours, including but not limited to:

- contacting employees to check availability for work/shifts, or to inquire about availability to fill in on short notice (e.g. due to unexpected absenteeism);
- contacting employees or requiring employees to work in the event of unanticipated circumstances;
- if business and operational reasons require work or contact outside of normal working hours.

Schedules and working hours vary within the Township and different employees have different working hours. Being able to disconnect from work will vary based on each employee’s own normal working schedule and the duties and responsibilities of their job.

Where possible, work-related communications (e.g. e-mails, phone calls, etc.) should be checked and/or sent during normal working hours. Where work patterns differ, some employees may send communications at a time which is not during the working

hours of the recipient. Where this is the case, the sender should give consideration to the content and timing of their communication and understand that the recipient may not respond until their working hours. Similarly, meetings should be scheduled during working hours of all attendees, whenever reasonably possible.

Some employees may be provided with devices, such as a mobile phone, laptop, or tablet as outlined in related Township Policy. These are provided to employees to allow flexibility in how such employees complete their work. These employees are expected to be reasonably reachable in the event of an urgent work requirement and to work if the circumstances warrant (e.g. to respond to urgent work communications).

Any communications requiring attention outside of the recipient's regular working hours should be identified by the sender as such. Employees must also be respectful of others' right to disconnect and should not expect their co-workers to respond, communicate, or complete work when not working.

Workload and Productivity

The Township understands that employees may want or need to work outside their normal hours to meet a time-sensitive deadline, to attend to an urgent matter, or due to unforeseen circumstances; however, employees should not regularly or frequently work outside their scheduled hours to complete or catch up on work.

Employees who cannot manage their workload during their regularly scheduled hours should meet with their Director or the CAO to evaluate the current workload, priorities, and due dates.

Directors will work with employees to come up with a solution to ensure:

- The current workload does not result in the employee working excess hours or contribute to additional stress and burnout;
- Normal job duties can be completed during working hours; and
- Employees can remain productive and meet organizational goals and objectives.

Working additional hours does not always equate to higher productivity. Employees can maximize their productivity during their workday by using time management tactics, such as:

- Blocking off periods in their schedule and calendar to complete specific tasks or address communication;
- Working with their Director to organize work in order of priority or importance;
- Breaking down projects and tasks into manageable phases;

- Minimizing interruptions by setting their online status to “busy” or “do not disturb”;
- Trying to have at least one dedicated workday per week without meetings (where possible); and
- Setting goals to work continuously for a specified period before taking a break or responding to communication.

Time Off

The Township understands the importance for its employees to have personal time off. Employees are encouraged to use their accrued vacation time in full every year for rest, relaxation, and personal pursuits. Employees are expected to complete any time-sensitive projects and meet any deadlines before going on vacation. If work can be attended to when the employee returns, they can resume their duties where they left off before taking vacation. Directors will work with employees to delegate job-specific duties that must be completed while the employee is on vacation to maintain workflow and productivity. Employees should not be reluctant to take vacation due to workload, unless there are limitations or restrictions because of a due date, project priority, scheduling conflict, or unforeseen circumstance that prevent an employee from taking a vacation at a specific time requested.

Employment Standards

This Policy does not eliminate or limit any rights that an employee has under the *ESA*. Each employee retains their applicable rights under the *ESA*, including those regarding the performance (and non-performance) of work, and those regarding when work is deemed to have been performed.

Changes to Policy

The Township will review this Policy from time to time and may make changes at any time. Any changes will be communicated to employees.

Responsibilities

Employees will:

- ensure that they do not work outside of their working hours unless requested or required by their Supervisor or Director;
- ensure that they do not exceed the maximum working hours permitted under the *ESA* or work during an applicable time that they are to be free from work pursuant to the *ESA*;
- track and report work performed outside of their scheduled working hours and follow any time tracking methods as required in the Township’s Hours of Work

and Overtime Policy or collective agreement (if applicable) including when working remotely;

- be mindful of times that others (such as other employees, contractors, etc.) may be disconnecting from work (e.g., by generally avoiding emailing or calling outside normal working hours); and
- following any directions established by the Township relating to notifying others of times that the employee is disconnecting from work (e.g. out of office voicemails, automatic email replies, etc.).

Employer will:

- establish and maintain a written policy on disconnecting from work; and
- provide a copy of the written policy on disconnecting from work to all employees within 30 days of the policy being prepared or changed, and to new employees within 30 days of being hired.

Definitions

Disconnecting from Work: 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.

Monitoring and Compliance

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Authority and Related Policies

Legislated Requirements:	<i>Employment Standards Act, 1990</i> <i>Working for Workers Act, 2022 (Bill 88)</i>
Related Policies:	Hours of Work Policy and Vacation Policy

Contact

For more information on this policy, contact: Chief Administrative Officer.