

**A. PURPOSE:**

This telework program provides an option for certain employees to work remotely and for managers to help supervise their Sections, especially during times of the COVID-19 pandemic. This policy applies to all teleworking activities within the Division of Scientific Services (DSS). The ability to work remotely will be determined on an individual basis based on staffing responsibilities and the operational needs of the Division. All managers, supervisors, and teleworkers should be familiar with the contents of this policy.

**B. DEFINITIONS:**

- a. **Telework:** As defined in the State's 'Agreement on Final Telework Policy': "Telework is a voluntary agreement whereby an employee is permitted to work from home, or other approved location, on a pre-approved basis for part of his or her workweek. Telework does not change the nature of an employee's work, the hours the employee is expected to be working, the employee's official duty station, or the employee's obligation to comply with laws, regulations, and state and agency policies."

There are two types of telework.

(1) Routine telework: occurs as part of an ongoing, regular schedule

(2) Situational telework: approved on a case-by-case basis where the hours worked were not part of "Routine telework." To be eligible for "Situational telework" under this policy an employee must either have an approved application for such telework or have an approved application for "Regular telework."

- b. **Teleworker:** someone who works at a remote location, and communicates with their office by phone, email, or internet: Must be a regular employee who has successfully passed their probationary period and has a documented history of job performance that meets or exceeds their supervisor's expectations. Those applying to telework must apply through the DAS portal semi-annually following the guidance of the state's "Final Agreement on Telework Policy".
- c. **VPN (Virtual Private Network):** A security feature which enables employees (e.g. those that telework) to send and receive data across shared or public networks as if their computing devices were directly connected to the DSS Laboratory's network.

**C. RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a. Director: To direct and approve all teleworking.
- b. Teleworkers: To ensure all organization (both DESPP and DSS) policies, rules, and practices are applied and followed during telework. Staff who telework must have work

and be able to successfully complete such work while away from the DSS lab building in order to be approved to telework.

Additional guidance from the state's "Final Agreement on Telework" is as follows:

The teleworker is responsible for maintaining a designated workspace in a safe, healthy, professional and secure manner. The dedicated workspace must have the necessary environment and furnishings to enable the employee to accomplish his/her assigned duties, including an appropriate work surface and chair.

The teleworker must have reliable phone and internet services in place at the telework location to conduct their work duties. The teleworker is required to provide the phone numbers where they can be reached on telework days. Teleworkers are not authorized to perform work at any site other than the approved teleworking location for the duration of the teleworking shift without specific, written, management approval.

- c. Deputy Directors/Assistant Directors/Scientific Services Administrative Manager: To manage the telework operations, ensure staff are trained in the teleworking policy, and monitor work performance to ensure that productivity and work standards are met.
- d. Quality Manager: To ensure that quality is maintained and to ensure that telework policy aligns with all accreditation standards (e.g., ANAB and FBI DNA QAS).

#### **D. ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES:**

The telework program is a flexible work arrangement under which staff perform duties and have responsibilities similar to as if they were physically at their duty station. The DSS will follow the guidance of the State's "Agreement on Final Telework Policy" and has been tailored accordingly to fit the needs of DSS:

- a. Participation in the program is voluntary and subject to management approval following state guidelines.
- b. The employee must possess the appropriate equipment to allow the job to be performed away from the central worksite (aka: duty station). Equipment such as a laptop with appropriate software will be provided to teleworking employees in order to fulfill their job duties.
- c. Teleworkers must have adequate internet access at the remote location. An example of inadequate internet access may be a slow connection speed (e.g., dial-up or DSL services) which prohibits reasonable work from being performed remotely.
- d. The employee will be in compliance with all applicable DSS, DESPP, and DESPP IT policies and procedures, including security, privacy, and confidentiality.
- e. Managers/supervisors will assess performance by monitoring quality of results and productivity of teleworking staff. Pre-established objectives and measures such as staff

error rates, turn-around-times, case report/review (technical/administrative) metrics ensure that employees are meeting expectations.

- f. A telework arrangement can be terminated by Management at any time.
- g. All property owned by the organization used at home by the teleworker is to be returned to the organization when the teleworker ceases to telework.
- h. Duration and scheduling of telework activities will be dependent on appropriate managers/supervisors as well as based on the need for teleworking within the different sections of the DSS laboratory. Identification of eligible staff for telework is based on management review of responsibilities and duties of applicable positions.
- i. Management may require teleworkers to report to the laboratory on scheduled telework days, when necessary, in order to meet operational needs.
- j. Teleworking staff must maintain a daily log of activities on days when working remotely.
- k. Appropriate software (e.g., Adobe) will be used to make edits/additions on paperwork (e.g., cross-outs, initials, dates). During teleworking activities the use of non-inked (i.e., computer-typed) initials and/or signatures are acceptable forms of identification and are acceptable alternatives to conventional methods of handwritten/inked edits/additions within casework. General guidance on the use of such digital tools can be found later within this document.
- l. Original materials/records including case files will not be removed from the DSS laboratory building for the purpose of teleworking. This restriction does not apply to copies.

#### **E. USING VPN:**

When performing DSS work remotely staff will use Department-issued computers, VPN connections, and authorized software in order to engage in acceptable forms of approved teleworking activities. This can happen manually or automatically, depending how a laptop or tablet was configured.

- a. Manually establishing the VPN:
  - i. Ensure you are connected to a home network that has good connectivity and speed ability (e.g., greater than 50 Mbps download and greater than 5 Mbps upload speed). If home networks are impaired then tethering to a cell phone may be an option.
  - ii. Establish a connection by opening the VPN link. This is usually the “Cisco AnyConnect Secure Mobility Client” application
  - iii. A dialogue box will appear. Log in with your assigned user name (e.g., last name and first initial without any spaces, Employee number) and applicable password.

- iv. A dialogue box will open asking for the token code.
  - v. A token code will be electronically sent (e.g., e-mail or text) to the assigned employee. The e-mail is from 'rsa.best@gov'. The token code will generally be an 8 digit number and will expire in a short time period (e.g., after 10 minutes).
  - vi. Type the token code as prompted, click the 'ok' button, and accept the criteria in the pop-up box.
  - vii. Use the 'Remote Desktop Connection' function in order to remotely connect to computers within the DSS laboratory building. When the dialogue box is opened either select (it may self-populate) or type the appropriate IP address. Proceed to log into the remote computer as would be done if staff were physically at the DSS building.
- b. Automatically establishing the VPN:
- i. Ensure you are connected to a home network that has good connectivity and speed ability (e.g., greater than 50 Mbps download and greater than 5 Mbps upload speed). If home networks are impaired then tethering to a cell phone may be an option.
  - ii. Done through an application called 'NetMotion' which is automatically launched upon startup and operates behind the scenes (i.e., not needed to be launched by operator)
  - iii. Open the 'Remote Desktop Connection' application (if not already open)
  - iv. The 'DPS-HQ-...' computer and username should be pre-filled within the window
  - v. Click on the 'Connect' button
  - vi. The 'DPS Computer Policy' window should emerge. Select 'Ok' to continue

## **F. USING SOFTWARE WITH CASEFILE DOCUMENTS**

Changes made within casework documents by editing software while teleworking should be easily identifiable to a reader (e.g., different-colored font or highlight). The following are very limited instructions of how to use functions within the Adobe software for editing.

- a. Making additions (e.g., initials/dates/comments):

Note: Not available on all documents (e.g., digitally signed or non-optical character recognition (non-OCR))

- i. Under 'Tools' select 'Fill & Sign'

1. Use the 'Checkmark' option from the top header toolbar to add checks to documents. This tool is helpful for case review checklists and injection sheets, as well as batch paperwork.
2. Use the 'Ab Text' option to make additions (e.g., typed initials or free text statements).
- ii. Alternatively, under 'Tools' select 'Comment'.
  1. Choose the 'Text' option (plain 'T' in toolbar) in order to add text.
  2. Font colors can be changed using this feature to help distinguish additions.

Note: Initials with date must be added to the end of all additions within case documents

b. Making cross-outs:

- i. Under 'Tools' select "Fill & Sign".
  1. Select the "Line" tool ("—" on the toolbar) option and this allows a line be added.
  2. Ensure the line is not too thick to prevent reading the material being crossed-out.
- ii. Under 'Tools' select 'Comment' (alternate method)
  1. Choose the 'Draw' tool (Pencil icon)
  2. Add cross out lines freehand.
- iii. Under 'Tools' select 'Strikethrough' (alternate method)
  1. Drag and drop cursor over characters/words to strike through.
  2. Right-click area in order to change properties (e.g., color)

Note: Initials with date must be added to the end of all additions within case documents

c. Organizing documents:

- i. Under 'Tools' select 'Organize Pages'
  1. Change page order by dragging pages and dropping them
  2. Insert new pages by dragging and dropping from other pdf-documents or creating a new page by selecting 'Insert' from the toolbar
  3. Select 'Extract' from the toolbar to remove pages and transfer them to another document. This is helpful for moving electropherograms (E-grams) and various QRs to case folders. This option can also replace the need for photocopies.
- ii. Open the 'Page Thumbnails'
  1. Left-click on the farthest (left-most) grey-column on the side of the Adobe window

2. Click on the 'Page Thumbnails' button to open all the pages of the document
3. Repaginate by dragging-and-dropping
4. Move pages to other pdf-files by dragging-and-dropping

Note: Making backup copies to documents is suggested prior to editing.

Be careful to not delete extractions or pages as the 'Undo' feature will not bring delete pages back.

Deleting information after case files are completed and/or past review stages is not allowed.

Deleted pages/information may be marked for deletion but may not be removed in a permanent nature.

## **G. CHEMICAL ANALYSIS SECTION**

- a. Current practices regarding Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) protocols will be followed for all evidence submissions, handling, accessioning, storage, and analyses - with the exception of certain situations wherein initials or signatures are needed (e.g., physically initialing documents not contemporaneous with remote review of batches or reports).
- b. Upon inventorying the Analyst(s) will ensure that evidence corresponds to the items listed within the Request for Analysis (RFA) forms. If there are any discrepancies then they will be noted and the assigned Analyst(s) (or designee) will follow-up accordingly. If an evidence discrepancy occurs within the Controlled Substances Unit then a lead/supervisor (or higher) may be contacted and they can possibly assist with the correction process. When not under current examination all evidence will be stored under proper seal and in proper evidence storage areas according to protocols for each Unit and/or the Section.
- c. Analysis of evidence will occur according to each current standard operating procedure (SOP). The processing of data from evidence analysis can occur via Remote Connection and/or Virtual Private Networking (VPN). All instrumentation within the Section will have secure connectivity to remote connections.
- d. Data may need to be transferred from instrument computers to a networked location where such data will be processed remotely (e.g., through use of thumb drives or portable hard drives).
- e. Teleworking will usually commence after instrumental data collection has occurred. Analysts will remotely connect to computers/servers which house analytical data and process such data as if they were normally at work in the laboratory setting.
- f. By remotely logging-in the analysts will use the same instrumental software and parameters as if they were physically at the laboratory.

*Approved by Director: Dr. Guy Vallaro*

- g. Documentation of data may be in the form of printing to networked laboratory printers. When analysts return to work they shall log into applicable print jobs on the networked printers and obtain hardcopies of previously processed data.
- h. Alternatively, processed data may be saved as pdf-files and sent to shared drives so co-workers can perform reviews. Such reviews will be done using pdf files that will be accessible to teleworking employees.
- i. Each step may have to be documented within LIMS-plus software in order to ensure efficiency and casework completeness. Given no remediation after reviews, Analysts will be able to send their reports to shared drives so co-workers can perform further [administrative] reviews. Teleworking analysts will then be able to release reports remotely.
- j. The physical mailing of toxicology reports will not be performed remotely. Reports will be transmitted electronically and documented accordingly within LIMS-plus.
- k. Once fully reviewed and no remedial steps are necessary, technical and administrative reviews can occur as within non-batch casework.
- l. Once physically back in the laboratory staff will compile all relevant data and paperwork in order to ensure that everything went into their respective places (i.e., batch folders or casefile folders).
- m. All communications (e.g., receipt of paperwork/case documents, issued reports) will be done electronically and captured within LIMS-plus.
- n. Evidence will be placed under proper seal and returned via normal in-house laboratory operations when staff are physical in the laboratory.

## **H. BIOLOGY SECTION**

- a. Remote work is conducted in accordance with current applicable GLs, FB/DNA SOPs and WIs.
- b. Electronic communications (i.e. email approvals or casework discussions) not captured on processing QRs, are maintained either through PDF format or physical printouts.
- c. For cases processed remotely, LIMS-plus milestone completions will stand in place of case jacket labels. Analysts can fill out the milestone sticker as 'TW' or 'Telework'.
- d. Designated folders (S:\FB\Telework; U:\Telework\Cases; U:\Telework\Batches) should be utilized for in-progress work.

- e. Typical telework activities can include male screen batch analysis and review, DNA batch analysis and review, report writing and case reviews.
- f. Casework documents will be scanned or saved in PDF format. DNA electropherograms can be converted to PDF using the 'Print Preview' feature in the analysis software.
- g. In addition to a working PDF, Forensic Biology and DNA unsigned reports will continue to be saved as a Word Document in the appropriate folder(s).
- h. Secure, certificate based signatures must be utilized when signing final reports.
- i. Typed initials are acceptable in lieu of handwritten initials.
- j. The primary analyst is responsible for compiling final hardcopies.
- k. Final completed paperwork will supersede any other versions generated in the process. Originals QRs generated prior to final completion may be shredded.

## **I. IDENTIFICATION SECTION**

The Identification Section is comprised of the Firearms, Latent Print, Computer Crimes, Multimedia, and Imprint Units of the DSS. Each Unit performs "hands on" work on evidence, but also has the ability to conduct analysis in an electronic environment. It is the electronic environment of these Units that can be conducted remotely in teleworking situations. The examiners assigned to each unit will have a laptop off site that will use a VPN or NetMotion software to remote into the examiner's desktop computer or other computer as indicated below. Each Unit is unique in the type of analysis conducted and this SOP will address the areas that can be conducted remotely for each Unit. The examiners should plan ahead and be prepared to have multiple cases available in queue that can be worked on in a remote telework situation. The SOPs below describe the work that may be conducted in a remote telework environment. At the completion of the Administrative Review, the analyst may send the document to the DSS printer and select a delayed print option. Once back onsite at DSS, the analyst will print the final report, prepare the evidence and work product if applicable for transfer to the Evidence Receiving Unit.

### **a. Firearms Unit:**

- i. The Firearms Unit of DSS receives evidence submitted as physical evidence that must be processed on-site. The following processes are conducted on-site: NIBIN acquisition/correlation, test firing of weapons, serial number restorations and microscopic comparisons.
- ii. This Unit's worksheets are able to be completed digitally and uploaded to the examiner's FAH Drive. Paperwork generated from the NIBIN Brass Trax and Matchpoint are converted to PDF and uploaded to the examiner's FAH Drive.
- iii. The examiner will assemble their final conclusions on worksheets by remoting in to their desktop computers.



- iv. Reports will be generated through the LIMS-plus.
  - v. The technical review will be assigned through LIMS-plus. The technical reviewer will receive the email from LIMS-plus and will conduct the remote review of the digital file located in analyst's S: drive.
  - vi. Review of these documents is done on the standard technical review/administrative review Quality Record (QR FA-9) and also using the Remote Review Form to address corrections needed.
  - vii. Once the technical review has been completed, the Remote Review Form will be added to the S:drive and the Administrative Review will be assigned through LIMS-plus. Digital signatures are used to documentation of this work.
  - viii. At the conclusion of the Administrative Review, the milestone will be updated and the final report will be printed out and added to the final paper case file on-site.
  - ix. Milestone stickers on case files can be annotated with "telework" or "TW" for portions completed remotely.
- b. Latent Print Unit:
- i. The Latent Print Unit of DSS receives evidence in both a digital format and also as physical evidence. When evidence is submitted as physical evidence in nature, there are scanning and processing techniques that must be conducted on-site prior to converting impressions of value to a digital file.
  - ii. Once the latent evidence is in a digital format, the remainder of the comparison and verification work can be done in a remote environment.
  - iii. Requests for the release of fingerprint cards will be done via an electronic request to SPBI for the comparison part of the remote analysis.
  - iv. The examiner will conduct enhancements, sufficiency charts and comparisons by remoting into their desktop computers. Their desktop computer contains the necessary enhancement and processing software to conduct their comparative casework. AFIS searches must be conducted on-site due to CJIS security requirements.
  - v. The examiner will place their verification requests in their coworker's electronic folder, where the coworker can conduct the verification in a remote setting. Once all casework is completed and the worksheets are saved, the examiner can also generate the report through LIMS-plus.
  - vi. The technical review and administrative review is assigned through LIMS-plus and the review is conducted using the standard technical review/administrative review Quality Records (QR-LP-4) and also using the Remote Review Form to address corrections needed. Digital signatures are used to documentation this work.
  - vii. Milestone stickers on case files can be annotated with "telework" or "TW" for portions completed remotely.

c. Computer Crime Unit:

- i. The Computer Crimes Unit of the DSS receives physical evidence which must be processed upon receipt at the laboratory for the acquisition of data. The acquisition process of this evidence must be performed on site and then the imaged files or the data files are uploaded to the Computer Crimes Unit server and are accessible to the examiner on this physical workstation/computer.
- ii. These computers are not connected to the DESPP-BEST network. Remote teleworking connectivity to these workstation will be accomplished through the Cox Cable internet using Cisco Meraki VPN software. The examiner will use this VPN on the laptop to access their desktop workstation. This connection will allow the examiner to use their analysis software such as (Axiom, Encase, FTK, Cellebrite 4PC) to analyze the extracted data.
- iii. The Computer Crimes Unit worksheets, report and work product are all in electronic format and will be completed at the time of their analysis and uploaded to a centralized location for review by the technical reviewer and administrative reviewer.
- iv. Review of these documents is done on the standard technical review/administrative review Quality Records (QR CC-15, QR CC-29 or QR CC-53) and also using the Remote Review Form to address corrections needed.
- v. Digital signatures are used for the documentation of this work.
- vi. Milestone stickers on case files can be annotated with “telework” or “TW” for portions completed remotely.
- vii. No cases that are submitted to the DSS and are labeled as Child Pornography will be analyzed or reviewed in a remote teleworking environment. It is understood that sometimes images suspected of being child pornography are encountered in the data analysis of other types of offenses. In circumstances in which these types of images are encountered, the examiner should stop analyzing this case in a remote environment and continue on this case once back at the DSS.

d. Multimedia and Image Enhancement Unit

- i. The Multimedia and Image Enhancement Unit of the DSS receives evidence in a physical form and digital format. This Unit also responds off-site to assist in the retrieval of video evidence at crime scenes or locations related to a crime scene.
- ii. Depending on the format of the evidence submitted, some of the analysis work must be conducted completely on-site. This evidence includes tapes submitted in analog format that must be converted. Digital Video Recorders that need video exported are also worked on-site up to the point in which the digital images are imported into the examiner’s working folder.

- iii. If the evidence submitted is digital in nature or has been exported/converted into a digital format, the files are transferred into the examiner's working folder for enhancement. The enhancements and accompanying worksheets may be conducted in a remote telework environment by the analyst remoting into that computer.
  - iv. The analysis will be completed remotely and all worksheets associated with the analysis are completed at the time of analysis. Upon completion of the analysis, the examiner will upload and work products created to the working folder for technical review. The examiner will update LIMS-plus and assign the technical review to the other examiner. Review of these documents is done on the standard technical review/administrative review Quality Records (MMIE Review Checklist QR) and also using the Remote Review Form to address corrections needed.
  - v. Digital signatures are used for the documentation of this work.
  - vi. Milestone stickers on case files can be annotated with "telework" or "TW" for portions completed remotely.
  - vii. Upon completion of the AR, the final report will be printed out once on-site and the final product created for return to the submitting agency.
- e. Imprint Unit:
- i. The Imprint Unit of the DSS received evidence in both physical form and also as digital files that may be on disk. In the event that the evidence is in a physical nature, the enhancements and production of test impressions must be done on-site. These test impressions can then be digitized and uploaded to a working folder on the computer for enhancements using Photoshop or for searching in the Solemate database.
  - ii. Comparisons may be conducted using the digitized images. Worksheets are in an electronic format and are updated contemporaneously as the examination is conducted.
  - iii. Once the analysis is completed, the examiner will generate a report through LIMS-plus and provide a PDF of the worksheets and notify the DD that the case is ready to send out for technical review. ..
  - iv. Review of these documents is done on the standard technical review/administrative review Quality Records (QD-IM QR1 Check Sheet) and also using the Remote Review Form to address corrections needed. Upon completion of the AR.
  - v. Digital signatures are used for the documentation of this work.
  - vi. Milestone stickers on case files can be annotated with "telework" or "TW" for portions completed remotely.
  - vii. The final report will be printed out once on-site and the final product created for return to the submitting agency.

**J. REFERENCES:**

Agreement on Final Telework Policy: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/OPM/OLR/Notices/2021-TW-final-agreement-with-arbitrated-issue-included.pdf>

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