

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FOR THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REMOTE/HYBRID POLICY (DRAFT)



# REMOTE WORKING GUIDELINES

## 1. BRIEF AND PURPOSE

- 1.1. As a general principle, the NRF accepts that the work patterns of some staff may allow for flexible remote working arrangements.
- 1.2. The NRF aims to provide a value proposition to those categories of roles and employees who are amenable to hybrid working as an attraction, retention, and competitive tool for particularly scarce and critical skills and for high performing individuals.
- 1.3. The NRF further recognises the reality that remote working arrangements **may be voluntary or mandatory**, and that irrespective of the reasons, rules need to be put in place to assist both the NRF and its employees in navigating their way around remote working arrangements.
- 1.4. These guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the NRF Remote/Hybrid Working Policy.

## 2. GUIDELINE ELEMENTS

- 2.1. Remote working refers to a permanent or temporary arrangement between the employee and the employer:
  - 2.1.1. whereby the employee works from a non-office location; or
  - 2.1.2. works from home on certain days of the week on a recurring basis.
- 2.2. Remote/Hybrid working is an indefinite or temporary agreement between employees and managers to work from a non-designated office location.
- 2.3. When concluded in compliance with the provisions of this policy, a remote working agreement constitutes a consensual deviation from the employee's conditions of service.
- 2.4. Employees can work from home or at a place located outside of the NRF's designated office location or premises.
- 2.5. They may work remotely:
  - 2.5.1. Working from home on certain days of the week on a recurring basis.
  - 2.5.2. Daily, dividing their schedule between being present at the office and working from a remote location.
- 2.6. This guideline shall apply to all NRF staff members as may be designated by Management and in respect of voluntary or mandatory remote working arrangements.
- 2.7. This guideline shall not apply to remote working arrangements in respect of work to be performed outside the borders of South Africa or outside an employee's area of ordinary residence.

### 3. RESPONSIBILITIES WHILE WORKING REMOTELY

- 3.1. **Accountability:** Reporting to line management in respect of tasks completed for the day and/or matters of importance that ought to be followed up, must be duly prioritised in the said report.
- 3.2. **Health and Wellbeing:** Ensuring that the designated work area and/or chosen location is hygienically sound and/or does not pose threat to the life and/or personal wellbeing of the employee.
- 3.3. **Safety:** Maintain the designated work area and/or chosen location, ensuring that it is safe and without risk to the personal safety of the employee.
- 3.4. **Equipment and Tools provided by the employer:** The equipment and/or devices acquired from the NRF and/or in the care employee, which is deemed to be the property of the NRF, should–
  - 3.4.1. be maintained at all times;
  - 3.4.2. remain unaltered in respect of its condition and/or appearance;
  - 3.4.3. at all times be returned in the same condition as it was received;
  - 3.4.4. never be left unattended and shall be kept in an area free from any danger and/or possible harm; however, reasonable wear and tear shall be acceptable.
- 3.5. **Confidentiality and/or Protection of NRF Information:** Property in the form of soft- and/or hardcopies should not be made accessible and/or brought within the reach and/or grasp of unknown third parties and/or must be safeguarded at all material times.
- 3.6. **Communication with clients via form of telecommunication (MS Teams/Zoom):** The importance of the environment in which communication takes place with NRF clientele should not be underestimated given that the background and/or visuals and/or audio surrounds impact not only on the professionalism and/or image of the employee concerned but can also potentially affect the reputation of the NRF.
- 3.7. **Accessibility and/or availability to effectively communicate:** The employee is responsible for maintaining and/or mandated to ensure a secure internet connection for timeous communication and/or fluent responses to NRF clientele. An employee who is obliged to discharge duties from a remote workstation cannot expect the NRF to accept responsibility for basic amenities in order for them to discharge their duties, and/or cannot rely on frivolous excuses and/or expect the employer to facilitate same.

### 4. PRE-REQUISITES FOR REMOTE/HYBRID WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

For remote working arrangements to be considered, the following pre-requisites must be satisfied:

- 4.1. The employee working remotely agrees to work online during working hours as stipulated in their employment contract.
- 4.2. The nature of the work performed by the employee can be executed remotely.

- 4.3. The employee has access to all the necessary tools (that includes access to reliable internet connectivity) to execute their functions remotely.
- 4.4. The employee agrees that the employer shall set daily/weekly/monthly tasks with specified deadlines. The employee can achieve the set targets and outcomes required while working remotely.
- 4.5. The required support for internal and external stakeholders will continue uninterrupted; i.e. all communication conducted via email and telephone with clients takes place within the stipulated SLA timeframes.
- 4.6. The required support including, IT, People & Culture and leadership for the remote worker will continue, uninterrupted.

## **5. COMMITMENTS**

For a remote work arrangement to be a success, the employees and line managers must commit to the following:

### **5.1. Employees Must:**

#### **Stay connected, through –**

- 5.1.1. Establishing work practices that makes the remote working arrangement transparent, positive and convenient for internal and external stakeholders.
- 5.1.2. Availability remains flexible and attendance of meetings, training sessions etc. are punctual on request of the line manager or as part of the employees' job responsibilities.
- 5.1.3. Updating contact details to stay connected and contactable on a regular basis. This includes the physical address of the remote working location.
- 5.1.4. During working hours, remaining contactable, keeping in contact with colleagues and staying up to date with events taking place or being arranged within the organisation.
- 5.1.5. Stay informed, through familiarising themselves and fully comply with the terms of Conditions of Service, all NRF Policies, job requirements and performance expectations.
- 5.1.6. Complying with the provisions of this policy and the occupational health and safety regulations, and ensuring the work environment is safe.

#### **Staying safe, through –**

- 5.1.7. Setting up or selecting a work area that is safe for themselves and others entering it.
- 5.1.8. Safeguarding proprietary information, in whatever form, as specified by NRF information security instructions and advising as a matter of urgency if information security is breached.

- 5.1.9. Maintaining a healthy work-life balance and taking leave when not performing work duties.
- 5.1.10. Taking responsibility to achieve optimal wellbeing, including mental, emotional, and psychological, by utilising NRF provided employee wellness programmes and checking in regularly with line manager and team members.

## **5.2. Line Managers Must:**

### **Engage and enable their teams, through –**

- 5.2.1. Continuing standard leadership activities, including career development, continuous feedback, performance development and reviews and ensuring equal opportunities for all, including remote workers.
- 5.2.2. Being flexible and working with remote and office-based team members to reimagine and co-create new ways of connecting both on- and off-line.
- 5.2.3. Ensuring that the team member has all the necessary tools and equipment they need to work remotely effectively and maintaining an inventory of NRF owned equipment and software in the team member's possession.
- 5.2.4. Ensuring that all team members feel as part of the team by keeping them up to date with relevant business events influencing their work and environment.
- 5.2.5. Ensuring there is a safe space on site for team members to share at the designated NRF office location.

### **Stay informed, through –**

- 5.2.6. Familiarising themselves with publicly available guidance on how to lead remotely located workers, and ensuring those team members working remotely have completed the required remote work learning.
- 5.2.7. Reviewing NRF policies related to remote working with team members, and ensuring that all parties are aware of requirements related to information security, equipment usage and occupational health and safety.
- 5.2.8. Notifying internal and external stakeholders of the arrangements as necessary.

### **Be fair and consistent, by –**

- 5.2.9. Considering any remote working request submitted to them, and coming to an agreement with the team member by discussing and considering the work requirements and suitability of remote working.
- 5.2.10. Reserving the right to terminate the remote working arrangement after due consideration, including situations where there is an abuse or suspected abuse of the arrangement or when it is no longer operationally viable.

- 5.2.11. Safeguarding against unconscious bias as it relates to team members working remotely and their work ethic, commitment and performance.
- 5.2.12. Managing the expectations and reactions of team members who are not working remotely due to the nature of their role or their need to be office bound.
- 5.2.13. The commitments set out above shall, subject to necessary adaptations, be reduced to writing and constitute the remote work contract between the employee and the line manager. The remote work agreement can be reviewed at any time by the line manager.

## **6. HOURS OF WORK**

- 6.1. Hours of work per day remain unaffected and continue as per the employment contract. Core hours for availability may be negotiated with the line manager, and any arrangement in this regard will form part of the remote working agreement.

## **7. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY REQUIREMENTS**

- 7.1. The NRF has a duty of care towards employees and will as far as reasonably practicable, provide a working environment that is safe and without risk to health.
- 7.2. For employees working remotely, the NRF will:
  - 7.2.1. Provide information, instructions and training as may be necessary to ensure the health and safety of such employees.
  - 7.2.2. Take all reasonable measures to ensure that requirements of relevant legislation are complied with.
  - 7.2.3. Devise such measures as may be necessary for the health and safety of the employee, especially the mental health of employees working remotely.
  - 7.2.4. Employees have a duty to protect themselves and others and to implement preventative control measures. This includes adhering to any information, instruction, or training provided by the NRF and adopting safe work behaviours.
  - 7.2.5. Remote workers must notify their line manager immediately if they become aware of any unsafe situation or risk that needs to be addressed in their remote work location.

## **8. INJURY WHILE WORKING REMOTELY**

- 8.1. It remains the responsibility of the employee to notify the NRF of any injury or illness arising out of or in the course of work while performing work functions in an agreed upon remote work area.
- 8.2. The NRF will incur no liability for any incident, loss, destruction, or injury that occur outside agreed working hours, or not in connection with work activities at remote working locations. This includes incidents, loss, destruction, or injuries that involves family members, visitors or

other persons that may be affected by such occurrences within or around the employee's remote working area.

- 8.3. In the event of an injury on duty, the employer is protected in terms of COIDA against all civil claims which may be instituted against him/her, even in the event of alleged negligence; therefore, the–

8.3.1. The employee shall take all necessary and/or precautionary steps and/or measures and/or ensure that all such steps or measures are taken to avoid and/or prevent any injury.

8.3.2. The employer and employee must comply with all the requirements of COIDA and/or ensure all such requirements are met.

8.3.3. The employee must immediately notify their employer of an injury.

8.3.4. The employee must submit pictures of the area where the incident / accident occurred and submit it along with the requisite incident and accident investigation procedure.

8.3.5. The NRF shall, as soon as possible, compile and/or complete a report on the incident / accident.

8.3.6. The employee shall, as soon as possible, assist the employer in obtaining a legible certified copy of the injured person's identification document.

8.3.7. The employee shall assist the employer in obtaining the medical reports after the injured employee consults a doctor.

8.3.8. The employee must cooperate and/or provide and/or assist the employer with any and/or all necessary and/or requested proof and/or documentation and/or particulars.

## **9. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 9.1. A laptop or desktop computer with modem and remote access to networks are the basic tools required. Where deemed necessary as part of the normal tools of trade, a cell phone allowance may also be provided. The line manager authorises NRF provided computer equipment and software for use in an employee's remote office. These items remain the property of the NRF and must be returned when the employment contract of the team member is terminated or when the remote working arrangement is revoked.

- 9.2. All equipment provided by the NRF is governed by the same policies as equipment at the primary place of work.

- 9.3. All NRF information and network connections must be secured when not in use. Issues regarding remote network access must be identified and resolved by the line manager and the employee, with the assistance of the IT Helpdesk if necessary.

- 9.4. The NRF will repair or replace lost, damaged, or stolen equipment provided that the employee has taken appropriate precautions to safeguard the equipment. Liability in respect of theft or damage arising from the employee's negligence rests with the employee.
- 9.5. The NRF IT equipment is supported by IT. The IT Helpdesk will diagnose problems remotely to assist employees. If a problem cannot be remedied over the phone, the equipment must be brought into the office for repair. The line manager and employee should agree on alternative arrangements while equipment repairs take place.
- 9.6. In consultation with the line manager, employees may be eligible to access other NRF provided equipment to increase their remote work effectiveness.
- 9.7. Employees will be required to complete an asset register for any equipment removed from the NRF office.

## **10. EXPENSES**

- 10.1. The NRF does not usually reimburse employees for home office expenses, including but not limited to data and internet connectivity costs in excess of that provided as part of the basic tools.
- 10.2. Travel time and cost of travel between the remote working location and the NRF office is not compensated for, as the office location continues to be deemed the employees regular place of work.
- 10.3. Travel claims may not be submitted in line with the standard travel reimbursement, i.e., when travel exceeds that would be deemed normal travel to and from the recognised place of work.

## **11. DEPENDENT CARE**

- 11.1. Remote working arrangements cannot be used as a regular substitute for full-time dependent care. One advantage of working remotely is the opportunity to have more time with dependents, but it is the employee's responsibility to ensure that they are fully able to complete work assignments on time and remain available for meetings.

## **12. COMPLIANCE WITH DISCIPLINARY CODE AND POLICIES AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

- 12.1. The NRF disciplinary code and disciplinary measures and procedures remain applicable to employees while working remotely.
- 12.2. The employee hereby agrees and/or acknowledges that the NRF's disciplinary code and procedures shall remain in effect while the employee is working remotely.
- 12.3. The employee acknowledges and/or agrees that all reasonable (daily and/or weekly) output, outcomes and targets agreed on by both parties shall be monitored and that any failure and/or refusal whatsoever to achieve and/or reach and/or account for the aforementioned outputs, outcomes and targets shall result in disciplinary action.

12.4. The employee agrees that the following is required and shall be in addition to and incorporated into the ordinary forms of misconduct while working remotely:

12.4.1. The employee must remain at home and must remain contactable via telephonic, email, Microsoft Teams, Zoom or any other communication platform during working hours and upon the request of the line manager.

12.4.2. The employee must obey all reasonable instructions and/or perform all tasks given by their manager during working hours and within the scope of employment.

12.4.3. The employee must take all precautions and/or reasonable measures to protect all NRF equipment and/or software and/or information which is in the possession and/or care of the employee while at home, which includes maintaining confidentiality.

12.4.4. The employee must maintain the utmost good faith and honesty when corresponding with the employer and/or manager, especially regarding work-related tasks and outputs and time usage.

12.4.5. The employee agrees that the ordinary business hours shall continue to apply and that the employee must present themselves via the above platforms to be available to work during those hours.

12.4.6. The employee acknowledges and/or agrees that the employer reserves the right to discipline the employee for all and/or any transgression of the disciplinary code, including the additional considerations above.

12.4.7. The employee acknowledges and/or agrees that they shall adhere to the principles of professionalism and standard of work normally required while at work and shall be professional when dealing with to clients and management. This includes the following:

12.4.7.1. The employee must be properly and professionally dressed for any Skype, Microsoft Teams and/or any other manner of meeting and/or consultation.

12.4.7.2. The employee must respond timeously (within 24 - 48 hours) to all correspondence and/or requests from clients and/or management.

12.4.7.3. The employee must update and/or inform management of progress on a daily and/or weekly basis (as agreed) and/or of any challenges and/or problems encountered in the rendering of professional services.

### **13. TERMINATION OF REMOTE WORK ARRANGEMENTS**

13.1. The NRF may, at any stage, withdraw an employee's remote working arrangement, should the employee's performance deteriorate, or their conduct not be in keeping with the conditions and intention of the remote working arrangement and / or become unaligned to the operational requirements of the business.