State of Vermont
Agency of Administration
Office of the Secretary
Pavilion Office Building
109 State Street, 5th Floor
Montpelier, VT 05609-0201
www.aoa.vermont.gov

[phone] 802-828-3322
[fax] 802-828-3320

Susanne R. Young, Secretary

MEMORANDUM

TO: Appointing Authorities, Elected Officials and State Employees
CC: Judicial and Legislative Branches
FROM: Susanne R. Young, Secretary of Administration
DATE: October 30, 2020
SUBJECT: Remote Work for State Employees Extended to March 31, 2021

Susanne R. Young Digitally signed by Susanne R. Young Date: 2020.10.30 15:27:15 -04'00'

Appointing authorities and State employees were informed on August 6, 2020 that State employees should expect to work remotely due to the pandemic, when able to do so, until at least December 31, 2020. Current conditions warrant an extension of telework for those able to do so ***until March 31, 2021***.

Over the summer, several State operations returned from telework to the worksite to offer "in person" services where required, such as the district offices of the Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles and where operational needs required on site personnel, such as district garages and to re-open rest areas. These on-site workers added to the workforce who have remained at their worksites throughout the pandemic, such as in our health labs, 24/7 facilities, law enforcement and offices where operations cannot be sustained without some physical presence in the worksite. This extension of telework will not change or impact these operations or employees currently required to be at the worksite.

In the last weeks, Vermont has experienced an increase in COVID-19 infections and some outbreaks have been traced back to social gatherings. This is occurring during the season when we are collectively moving indoors and increasing the risk of spread of the virus if we do not maintain our vigilance in prevention strategies. School re-openings have taken place successfully and part of that success has been the flexibility of our schools and families with school age children to shift to in-person and/or remote learning schedules as needed very quickly. By maintaining our telework status for all others now, we are contributing to heighten our efforts to suppress the virus while we look forward to the roll out of a vaccine. It will additionally keep State offices from competing for supplies that have been difficult to obtain in the quantities needed, such as sanitizers, disinfectants, and other cleaning products.

Those who can telework should plan to do so until March 31, 2021. If conditions warrant an extension, notice will be provided by March 1, 2021. The guidance from the Department of Human Resources (DHR) dated August 6, 2020 continues to apply, including:

- Flexible schedules for employees, for both on-site and remote workers, should be encouraged and accommodated.

VERMONT

- Occasional, non-recurring access that might be needed to retrieve paper files or perform document printing or scanning is authorized.
- Appointing authorities have some discretion to authorize the return to work of individual employees subject to the criteria in the August 6, 2020 memo.

***Agencies and departments that intend to return employees beyond the scope of the above criteria shall submit a plan to the Commissioner of Buildings and General Services (BGS)*:** Return to Worksite Guidance was issued pursuant to the authority of the Secretary of the Agency of Administration under Addendum 5 to the Amended and Restated Executive Order 01-20, updated September 11, 2020. This guidance requires State agencies and departments, with the exception of the Department of Motor Vehicles, that intend to return employees to the worksite beyond those already identified as operationally necessary and those authorized to return at the appointing authority's discretion noted above, to submit a Reopening/Returning to the Worksite Plan to the Commissioner of BGS.

Any State employee and official working on-site, or who comes to the worksite on an occasional, non-recurring basis, must continue to strictly adhere to all current health and safety guidance, including:

- Complete the health screening before entering the worksite and stay home if sick or symptomatic;
- Wear a face mask over your nose and mouth whenever in the presence of another;
- Physically distance whenever possible. Limit the number of people occupying a single indoor space. Reference the ACCD COVID-19 site for allowable occupancy levels;
- Wash or sanitize your hands often;
- Limit travel between multiple worksites;
- Follow current out-of-state travel guidance and any quarantine restrictions upon return; and
- Understand the risks to your health and the health of others before you attend any social gathering.

This pandemic has brought out the very best in our State workforce, from our frontline employees providing services to help limit the spread of COVID-19 and deliver critical services to Vermonters at a time when it's needed most, to those working behind the scenes providing vital support from every single agency and department. The flexibility and adaptability to change in a workforce of our size has been truly remarkable, building a more cohesive, enterprise-wide operation that will benefit Vermonters for years to come. Thank you to every one of you. If we keep our guard up and exercise common sense and proven precautions, we will be back in our worksites in some fashion soon. Stay safe. I am confident will we continue to overcome these challenging times together.

###

VERMONT