
	Title:	Disconnecting From Work Policy		
	Number:	HR-006		
	Revision Date:	June 15, 2022	Approved by:	CLT
	Revision Number:		Area:	Corporate
	Document Type:	Policy	Department:	Human Resources

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## **1.0 Introduction**

The Corporation of the City of Welland (the “**City**”) understands that work-related pressures and the feeling of an inability to disconnect from one’s job can lead to stress and may result in negative impacts on employee mental and physical health.

The Corporation is committed to the health and well-being of our employees. The goal of this Policy is to promote a healthy and sustainable work-life balance in the workplace. The Policy outlines the Corporation’s expectations and provides ‘best practices’ for all employees regarding disconnecting from work after working hours.

## **2.0 Purpose and Scope**


This Policy applies to all employees, including temporary, part-time, and probationary employees engaged by the Corporation (collectively, “**Staff**”).

An employee’s ability to disconnect from work depends on the city’s operational needs and the duties and obligations of the employee’s position, subject to the employee’s employment contract, collective agreement, terms and conditions of employment, corporate policy, and applicable legislation.

Employees may need to be contacted outside of their work hours if urgent, unforeseeable circumstances or an emergency arises, and/or when operations requirements require contact.

## **3.0 Definitions**

- 3.1. Disconnecting from Work** – Not engaging in work-related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls or the sending or reviewing of other messages, to be free from the performance of work outside of scheduled working hours.
- 3.2. Working Hours** – The Corporation’s regular working hours are 8:30a.m. to 4:30p.m., Monday to Friday, (“**Working Hours**”). Please note that select Staff *may* have varying regular working hours or schedules as specified in their employment contracts. Staff are responsible for referring to their respective contracts to verify their regular working hours. This Policy should be applied within the context of the individual employee’s regular work schedule.

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## **4.0 Application**

### **4.1. Corporation Expectations**


All Staff must be aware of the Corporation’s working hours and take steps to be mindful, and where possible, reduce their communication outside of working hours. Staff are expected to organize their workflow and daily tasks to reduce instances of after-hours communication, using their judgment regarding the urgency and necessity of such communications.

The Corporation recognizes that there will be instances where staff find it necessary to contact, be responsive, or monitor workplace communications from co-workers or clients outside of working hours to meet the needs of the Corporation. Such instances include, but are not limited to, unforeseeable circumstances, emergencies, or where business and operational reasons require contact outside of normal working hours. Nothing in this Policy shall be interpreted as preventing staff from doing so, as such responsiveness is vital to the success of our business and is a core condition of employment.

### **4.2. Workload and Productivity – Best Practices and Helpful Tips**

To assist staff in promoting a healthy and sustainable work-life balance in the workplace, the Corporation has implemented the following best practices:

- If a matter is urgent or simply requires the attention of staff after working hours, this should be clearly communicated to those working on the matter so that staff remain responsive and monitor their workplace communications accordingly;
- Staff should be proactive in making scheduling restrictions known to supervisors, managers and/or co-workers;
- Staff should be proactive in providing advance notice to supervisors, managers and/or co-workers of approved time off;
- Absent urgent or exceptional circumstances, staff should use their approved break time as time to re-charge and ensure optimal productivity throughout working hours;
- Staff should avoid sending communications (email communications or otherwise) outside of working hours, unless necessary. If an email can be sent the following morning, within working hours, this is preferable;
- Staff should avoid misuse or the overuse of the “cc” feature on email. Staff should avoid “cc-ing” individuals, after working hours, who are not critical to the correspondence and from which they do not require an immediate response;

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- General staff or corporation communications, or ‘All Users’ emails (social communications, Corporation-wide fundraising efforts etc.) should be sent during working hours save for urgent or exceptional circumstances; and
- Virtual and face-to-face meetings should be scheduled within working hours. All staff should be mindful to schedule meetings that are within attendees’ normal working hours, if possible.

### **5.0 Roles and Responsibilities**

Staff in managerial or supervisory positions are expected to work collaboratively with other staff members and adhere to the following additional best practices:

- Communicate the urgency of matters to staff to ensure that expectations regarding responsiveness and continued monitoring of workplace communications after working hours are clear;
- Avoid sending communications outside of working hours when the matter is not urgent or does not require immediate attention;
- Absent urgent or exceptional circumstances, take steps to ensure that tasks can be completed during regular working hours;
- Foster an environment in which there is an open dialogue with other staff members regarding individual capacity and workload to appropriately allocate work; and
- Ensure that staff have the training and tools they need to complete tasks in a timely fashion and meet Corporation goals and objectives.

### **6.0 Compliance**

The abovementioned lists are non-exhaustive and are to be used as interpretive tools to assist all staff in fulfilling Corporation expectations under the Policy.

Should staff have any concerns or questions regarding this Policy, they should raise them with their manager or supervisor to resolve the issue on an informal basis.

Where the issue remains unresolved, the matter can be raised or referred to Human Resources.

### **Revision History**

Date	Description of Change	Initials