

Guidelines For Flex Time Requests

Employees who desire flex time working hours can submit a written flex time request form to their Department Head. Eligibility is open to eligible employees in good standing, available to regular full and part-time employees, as well as temporary workers, contingent on compliance with applicable collective bargaining agreements, if an employee is a union member, and contingent on the operational and business needs of the Department. Requests will be reviewed in the context of the working environment.

It must be noted that use of flex time arrangements is a privilege which can be revoked at the discretion of the City Manager. Past approval of flex time arrangements is no guarantee of continued approval.

- The Department needs to ensure that there is adequate staff coverage to meet the operating requirements of the department during normal business hours.
- Employees must work core hours that limit the range of starting and ending times to an hour and a half before and an hour and a half after the end of the normal business day (i.e. 7 AM to 6:30 PM for those who work the standard 8:30am-5pm day)
- Minimum half hour unpaid lunch. Break time should not be routinely bracketed up to lunch to extend time; the breaks are designed as breaks, not lunch extenders. Exceptions can be made under infrequent special circumstances
- The normal workweek of 37.5 or 40.0 hours and 5 days shall be retained, unless defined differently by position or union contract.
- The service hours for all City departments shall remain the same.
- Individuals seeking flexible work arrangements must submit a written flex time request to their supervisor and Department Head, explaining how the change will affect delivery of services, access by the public, and impact on co-workers.
- Flex time arrangements must be in total compliance with union contracts, when employees using flex time are union members.
- Flex time arrangements can be *regular* (e.g., a person whose hours are adjusted to 8:00-4:30 every day, every week) or *intermittent* (e.g., during school summer vacations), or in response to *temporary* situations (e.g., emergencies, medical appointments, etc.).
- Employee participation in *regular* and *intermittent* flex time is subject to a three month pilot period, followed by annual review. Participation can be revoked by the City Manager based on either business needs or as a result of employee performance/behavior.
- This policy does not allow flexible arrangements for full-time employees to result in a compressed work week, i.e., working fewer than five days in a work week. Rare exceptions can be made for *temporary* flex time arrangements, based upon compelling circumstances.

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FLEX TIME POLICY

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One of the primary responsibilities of the City of Cambridge and its departments is serving the public. Providing all necessary governmental services to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of its citizens is the primary business of the City. Meeting these essential business needs of the City with a focus on providing excellent customer service must be seen as having paramount importance in the implementation of this policy. At no time should departments compromise the service offered to the public or efficient business operations to accommodate employees' requests for flex time schedules.

1. Objective

A flex time work schedule accomplishes two goals: (1) it enhances or sustains the City's delivery of services, both externally to the community and internally to co-workers and other City departments, and (2) it allows employees latitude in scheduling their working hours within the specified limits of this policy.

2. Policy

Individuals may use flex time work schedules, subject to the following conditions:

- The implementation, continuance, or modification of flex time shall be at the discretion of the City Manager.
- Departments wanting to implement flex time must first submit a flex time plan to the Personnel Director, summarizing how business needs will be met and detailing employee participation in flex time scheduling.
- Departmental plans will be reviewed by the Flex Time Committee and will then be forwarded to the City Manager, who will make the final determination of flex time approval.
- Adequate staff coverage sufficient to meet the operating requirements of the department shall be maintained at all times.
- The normal workweek of 37.5 or 40.0 hours and 5 days shall be retained, unless defined differently by position or union contract.
- The service hours for all City departments shall remain the same.
- Individuals seeking flexible work arrangements must submit a written flex time request to their supervisor and Department Head, explaining how the change will affect delivery of services, access by the public, and impact on co-workers.
- Flex time arrangements must be in total compliance with union contracts, when employees using flex time are union members.
- Flex time arrangements can be *regular* (e.g., a person whose hours are adjusted to 8:00-4:30 every day, every week) or *intermittent* (e.g., during school summer vacations), or in response to *temporary* situations (e.g., emergencies, medical appointments, etc.). [See complete definitions in Section #3 below.]
- Employee participation in *regular* and *intermittent* flex time is subject to a three month pilot period, followed by annual review. Participation can be revoked by the City

Manager based on either business needs or as a result of employee performance/behavior.
[See Section #5 on procedures for making changes to approved flex time schedules.]

3. Definitions

Flex time is a schedule by which an employee may – on a weekly basis and within specific limits dictated by the need of the job – re-define his/her working hours as long as the employee completes 37.5 hr or 40.0 hr work per week (for full-time employees). Typically and generally, the employee will redefine his/her working hours to complete 7.5 hours (for 37.5 hr/wk employees) or 8.0 hours (for 40.0 hr/wk employees) work per day (unless defined differently by position or union contract). Time limits are placed on the amount of flexibility an employee has by establishing “band width” and “maximum” and “minimum” number of hours per day.

- *Band width* is the span of time beginning at the earliest time an employee may start work and ending at the latest time an employee may stop work.
- *Maximum hours* are the upper limit of hours which an employee can work in a day within the application of the flex time policy. *Minimum hours* are the lower limit of hours which an employee can work in a day within the application of the flex time policy.
- *Regular flex time* is an approved flex time arrangement which is standard and on-going for the employee’s work week.
- *Intermittent flex time* is an approved flex time arrangement which occurs at predictable times, but is not on-going (e.g., during school summer vacations).
- *Temporary flex time* is an approved flex time arrangement which is in response to a specific, short-term situation (e.g., to attend to emergency or medical needs). Department Heads may approve requests for temporary flex time without going through the formal approval process described in Sections #4 and #5 below. *Temporary flex time* arrangements may not exceed one month.

The normal lunch break is one hour. Within flex time plans, it may be reduced to one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) hour within the application of this policy; Department Heads can offer or eliminate this option at their discretion, based on managing departmental operations and maintaining customer service. An employee may adjust his/her lunch period beyond one hour, as long as management approval is obtained and the operations of the department are not disrupted. An employee may not take less than one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) hour lunch period as part of a regular or intermittent flex time schedule; an employee may be allowed to eliminate a lunch time period only in response to a need for a *temporary* flex time arrangement.

Employees may accrue compensatory time, as a result of business necessity and with management approval, working more than regularly scheduled hours in one day, including above the maximum flex time hours. Similarly, employees may use vacation, personal, or other leave time, with management approval, working less than minimum hours in one day. These options, however, still require that an individual account for a 37.5 or 40.0 hour, 5-day workweek unless defined differently by position or union contract. Going above maximum or below minimum hours in one day cannot be part of a *regular* or *intermittent* flex time arrangement, but may be part of a *temporary* arrangement in exceptional circumstances.

This policy does not allow flexible arrangements for full-time employees to result in a compressed work week, i.e., working fewer than five days in a work week. Exceptions can be made for *temporary* flex time arrangements.

This policy applies to regular full-time and part-time employees, as well as temporary employees. This policy applies to part-time employees only when they wish to change their work hours outside of the standard service day for the department.

4. Responsibilities

Employee

The employee seeking a non-traditional work arrangement is required to present a written proposal to his/her supervisor. The proposal explains how the change will affect the delivery of services to the public, the operations of the department and work unit, and the impact on co-workers. The employee plans and organizes his/her time to meet the job requirements as established by the supervisor. Also, the employee participates in the solution of conflicts between his/her job and his/her flex time schedule and informs the supervisor when coverage is not adequate.

An employee submitting a request should realize that this policy is designed to provide opportunities for flexible work arrangements that will enhance or sustain the business operations of the City. While the option to submit a proposal is open to all eligible employees, not every proposal may be suitable for accomplishing business objectives. Employees whose proposals cannot be accommodated may re-submit a proposal annually, and, with Department Head agreement, if and when business conditions permit.

An employee with an approved flex time plan who is starting in a new position or transferring to another department should submit his/her plan to the (new) supervisor. Approval is contingent on the ability to meet the business needs of the new position and/or department. Continuation of the flex time arrangement will need to be approved by the new supervisor and Department Head.

Supervisor

The supervisor plans and schedules job assignments, ensuring that there is sufficient staff to meet the business needs during the core hours of the standard work day. The supervisor informs the employees of the tasks and schedules which are to be met. The supervisor may want to create processes for ensuring coverage when he/she is not available to resolve problems.

In regular performance discussions with an employee working flexible hours, the supervisor will evaluate and discuss how the individual's flex time plan affects the department's ability to meet business needs.

Department Head

The Department Head ensures that flex time is administered in a consistent and equitable manner within the department and that flex time arrangements conform with both City policy and union contracts. The Department Head also ensures that staffing is available at all times in order to meet the operational requirements of the department.

Personnel

The Personnel Department ensures that flex time is administered in a consistent and equitable manner throughout the City. The Personnel Department also ensures that flex time schedules conform to appropriate laws, City policy, and union contracts.

Flex Time Committee

The Flex-Time Committee reviews and forwards departmental flex time requests to the City Manager. It also provides oversight of the implementation of this policy.

City Manager

The City Manager reviews and, if acceptable, approves all flex time arrangements that are submitted by Department Heads. Prior to implementation of a new plan, it must be submitted, reviewed and approved by the City Manager. In general, plans are submitted June 1 for a July 1 approval. New flex time plans, or changes to approved flex time plans may also be submitted for approval at any time during the year, and if approved, will be valid until the following July 1. The City Manager may, at his discretion, revoke flex time approval.

5. Procedures

Initiating A Departmental Flex Time Program

The Department Head wishing to initiate a flex time program will create a plan and submit a summary to the City Manager and Personnel Director. [See Appendix for Flex Time Department Implementation Summary form.] The summary should include:

- Summary of how flex time arrangement will affect delivery of services to external and internal customers, including information about coverage of the work unit from 8:30-5:00 (or core hours of work unit).
- Procedures which the department or work unit will employ to ensure productive work is being accomplished during non-core hours. (E.g., Creating individual work plans, fully defining responsibilities, articulating work that can be productively done during non-core hours, etc.)
- Names, job codes and recommended action of employees in the department requesting *regular* or *intermittent* flex time.
- The individual flex time request forms.
- Confirmation that there is full compliance with union contract(s), for employee(s) who are union members and are starting flex time working arrangements.

The Department Head should have on file copies of written flex time request forms from each employee who is requesting a flex time work arrangement.

Flex time requests that employees submit to Department Heads after the initial submission period, should subsequently be submitted by Department Heads to the Personnel Director with a summary sheet, noting how this plan fits in with the overall departmental plan. [See Appendix for Flex Time Department Additional Request Summary form.] Whenever possible, plans need to be submitted one month prior to the proposed start date.

Experience and Evaluation Phase

After the City Manager has given approval to begin the program, and the program has been implemented, the Department Head will monitor program implementation and record

pertinent information in order to evaluate any significant effects resulting from flex time. The Department Head will evaluate all approved individual flex time plans three months after first implementation and will complete an evaluation form for each employee with flexible work arrangements. Department Heads will also review their overall plan periodically for the departmental implications and also to ensure that trends are identified and addressed.

Time Management and Administration

Flex time involves employees as well as supervisors in the dynamic process of time planning and organization.

Each participant must organize work time to meet the policy and operating requirements for time distribution, to be accountable for the required work hours, and to record hours worked each day (using department forms) and exceptions to the normal workday such as approved compensatory time, vacation or other absences.

Computation of Sick Time, Vacation, Personal and Administrative Time: Accrual and Use

The accrual of sick, vacation, personal and administrative time is the same for employees working flex time as for those working a standard schedule. It is based on hours worked in the previous calendar year.

Use of sick time and vacation/personal/administrative time is based on the regularly scheduled hours for the work day during which time is taken. When possible, employees are encouraged to work their regularly scheduled hours during weeks where they take less than the full week off. [See Appendix for examples of accrual and use of sick, vacation, personal, administrative time.] This facilitates the department's or work unit's ability to meet business goals and does not result in supervisors and co-workers needing to alter work schedules and plans. Altering regularly scheduled work time can be done only if: (1) service to the public and business objectives are not compromised, and (2) the employee has the Department Head's approval to alter regularly scheduled hours.

Holiday Pay

Credit given for full-day holidays is 7.5 hours (for 37.5 hr/wk employees) or 8.0 hours (for 40.0 hr/wk employees), even if the holiday falls on a day when the employee's flex time schedule would have them work more or less than 7.5 or 8.0 hours. Additional pay for the holiday, up to the usual number of hours worked, can be reached through the use of compensatory, vacation, or personal time, or by working additional hours during the week of the holiday. Holiday pay is pro-rated for part-time employees.

Maintaining A Departmental Flex Time Program

On an annual basis, Department Heads will submit their proposed flex time summary for the next fiscal year to the Personnel Director. These are due June 1 every year that the Department has an approved flex time program.

Contents of the plan should include:

- Summary of how flex time arrangement will affect delivery of services to external and internal customers, including information about coverage of the work unit from 8:30-5:00 (or core hours of work unit).

- Procedures which the department or work unit will employ to ensure productive work is being accomplished during non-core hours. (E.g., Creating individual work plans, fully defining responsibilities, articulating work that can be productively done during non-core hours, etc.)
- Names, job codes and recommended action of employees in the department requesting *regular* or *intermittent* flex time.
- Copies of the individual flex time request forms.
- Confirmation that there is full compliance with union contract(s), for employee(s) who are union members and are starting flex time working arrangements.

Changes To An Approved Flex Time Schedule

Changes to or revocations of the flex time can be made in three ways:

- 1) By the City Manager at any time.
- 2) By the Department Head with the City Manager's approval at the end of the three month evaluation phase.
- 3) By the Department Head's recommendation to the City Manager, based on changed business conditions or unsatisfactory performance or behavior of the employee. The recommendation to revoke will be submitted by the Department Head to the City Manager. Changes will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

6. Eligibility

Employees who desire flex time working hours can submit a written flex time request form to their Department Head. Eligibility is:

- Open to eligible employees in good standing.
- Available to regular full and part-time employees, as well as temporary workers.
- Contingent on compliance with applicable collective bargaining agreements, if an employee is a union member.
- Contingent on the operational and business needs of the Department. Requests will be reviewed in the context of the working environment.

It must be noted that use of flex time arrangements is a privilege which can be revoked at the discretion of the City Manager. Past approval of flex time arrangements is no guarantee of continued approval.

7. Exceptions to the Flex Time Policy

This policy has been designed to afford a wide variety of arrangements for employees. It is expected that deviations or requests for modification of this policy should be extremely rare and in response to exceptionally unusual situations. Exceptions need approval from the City Manager.

8. Guidelines

Standard service day (core hours)	The time during which normal service and functional operations must be available	8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Some departments/units have different defined business hours, i.e., non-standard service days)
Band width	The time during which employees may be on the job.	Up to 1½ hours prior to start of service day and 1½ hours after end of service day. For a standard service day the band width is 7:00 a.m.-6:30 p.m.
Contracted hours	The total number of hours which must be accounted for during the accounting period	37.5 hours or 40.0 hours for full-time employees (or as specified by position or union contract)
Accounting period	Time period over which contracted hours can be accumulated	1 week
Lunch break	The time an employee is off the job during the mid-day flex period	Recommended 1 hour, minimum ½ hour, for any work day longer than 5 hours
Daily hours	The number of hours that are typically and generally to be worked daily by employees	7.5 or 8 hours ¹
Maximum hours	The upper limit of hours that an employee may work in a day within the definition of the flex time policy.	9 hours
Minimum hours	The lower limit of hours which an employee can work in a day within the application of flex time.	5 hours

¹ Existing City policies for compensatory time, sick time, vacation time, personal time, or other leave time are not affected by the flex time guidelines.

9. Flexible Work Day Parameters

Standard Service Day

Band Width			
7:00 a.m.	8:30	5:00	6:30 p.m.
Flexible Starting Times	Standard Service Day (Core Hours)		Flexible Ending Times
Flexible Lunch Break (minimum ½ hour)			

Non-Standard Service Day

Band Width			
1½ hours	Start of service day	End of service day	1½ hours
Flexible Starting Times	Non-Standard Service Day (Hours for Position)		Flexible Ending Times
Flexible Lunch Break (minimum ½ hour)			