

 Human Resources Policies	Section #	Policy #
	III	37
	Approval Date:	Revision Date:
	December 2017	September 2025
Title:	ALTERNATIVE WORK ARRANGEMENTS	
Applies To:	All employees	

Policy statement:

The Region of Waterloo is committed to supporting alternate work options to promote work-life balance and support flexibility for employees in managing organizational needs and personal responsibilities, wherever practical without compromising the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. This Policy outlines the alternative work options that are available on an ongoing basis and during an emergency.

Note: for unionized employees, alternative work arrangements will be compliant with the terms and conditions in the collective agreement(s).

Definitions:

Flexible working hours

An employee works their regular daily and weekly hours, and may vary their starting time, finishing time, and or lunch period.

Hybrid work arrangements

When an employee completes their regular work duties and responsibilities both at a Region worksite and at their home.

Reduced workweek

An employee holds a full-time (FT) position, (35 hours per week) and is permitted to work three days (21 hours per week) or four days (28 hours per week) for a specific period of time.

Compressed workweek

When the normal working hours for a week, as described in the Standard Working Hours Policy (I-26), are worked in less than five equal working days.

Emergency alternative work arrangements

Arrangements required as a result of an urgent or emergency situation including, yet not limited, to any provincial or regional declarations of emergency.

Ad hoc alternative work arrangements

Arrangements of a temporary and targeted duration (often short-term and or intermittent) to

address a particular opportunity, issue or challenge.

Ongoing and time-limited alternative work arrangements

Arrangements of longer-term duration, that may be renewed and or reviewed on an annual basis, or arrangements that are time-limited (or “fixed-term”) by design.

Operating details:

Alternative work arrangements may be implemented in response to an employee, management or business request and should be responsive to changing employee, management and business needs. Approval of alternative work arrangements is subject to ensuring that operational requirements are met in a safe, secure and timely way and that performance and service to the public is maintained. The most appropriate alternative work arrangement will meet the needs of both the employee and the organization.

When considering an alternative work arrangement, the following applies:

Criteria

Although not every position may be appropriate for an alternative work arrangement, the following criteria will be considered in determining whether to proceed in implementing such an arrangement:

- Citizen service and operational needs must be assured and are the primary considerations in the scheduling of work.
- Participation in any of these options is voluntary and must be approved by management.
- Participation in a combination of these options is possible yet it is not an option to participate in both a reduced workweek and a compressed workweek at the same time.
- Alternative work arrangements will be approved only for those employees who have demonstrated, and who continue to demonstrate satisfactory performance and attendance.
- For unionized employees, alternative work arrangements will be compliant with the terms and conditions in the collective agreement(s).
- The employee must have established core working hours in consultation with their direct supervisor.
- Alternative work arrangements cannot be structured such that the employee earns a higher level of compensation on a total compensation basis (including and not limited to salary and benefits) than would have been earned had the alternative work arrangement not been implemented.
- Management reserves the right to alter, suspend or discontinue approved alternative work arrangements providing reasonable notice to the employee. In particular, managers reserve the right to suspend the alternative work arrangements during peak periods of vacation (e.g. summer and or December) or during peak workload periods. Employees may also terminate an alternative work arrangement by providing reasonable notice. Reasonable notice is defined as 30 days’ notice or alternatively, as mutually agreed upon the employee and their direct supervisor.

- All arrangements are put in place for a maximum of one year. After one year, the arrangement is reviewed and the employee and their supervisor decide whether it continues to be operationally feasible to continue with the arrangement.
- All applicable approved agreements must be submitted to the Human Resources department at least 30 days prior to the requested start date of the alternative work arrangement. Requests submitted in less than 30 days are not guaranteed to be implemented by the requested start date.

Approval

- The employee and supervisor discuss and complete the respective agreement forms detailed under each of the alternative work arrangement options.
- Gain approval from the appropriate operational leader.
- For urgent and or emergency situations that require immediate attention, the operational leader may proceed with an urgent and or emergency alternative work arrangement without completing the application in advance. In such circumstances, the arrangement will be documented as soon as possible.

Application

The following types of alternative work arrangements are available for consideration by employees and supervisors:

Reduced Work Week

- Full-time status is retained.
- Sick time and vacation time will be prorated.
- Benefit coverage will be prorated (employee pays prorated portion of Extended Health & Dental costs).
- Statutory holidays shall be paid in accordance with the *Employment Standards Act, 2000*. Hours worked will be entered into TAMS, the Region's time and attendance management system.
- OMERS pension program status will change to "other than continuous full-time service."
- Extra time worked is paid at a straight hourly rate. Extra time is not factored into benefit charges unless a longer term commitment is made (over 30 calendar days) and employee status is changed. Hours of work must still be based on a three (21 hours), four (28 hours) or five (35 hours) day work week.
- Salary increments will apply after the incumbent has worked the equivalent of a fulltime working year (for example, 1820 hours for a normal 35 hour per week position).
- Details of a reduced work week arrangement will be confirmed in a letter to the employee. Any employment condition not specifically stated in an employment letter will be on a prorated basis.
- Move to the hourly payroll.
- For approval of this arrangement, the employee and supervisor must complete the Alternative Work Arrangement Agreement. In the event the employee transfers to a new position, a new Alternative Work Arrangement Agreement will be created with the new supervisor.

- For unionized employees, the relevant collective agreement describes eligibility and application of the reduced work week arrangement.
- Submit the completed Alternative Work Arrangement Agreement to BenefitsHRC@regionofwaterloo.ca at least 30 days prior to the requested start date of the alternative work arrangement.

Compressed Work Week

- Not available for mandatory coverage jobs, such as those in an office environment where coverage needs to be provided for specific service hours.
- Standard working hours in a given pay period will be the same as for other staff.
- A maximum of 12 hours will be scheduled in a 24-hour period, and 44 hours in a week.
- A fixed work schedule will be set by the employee and supervisor, with consideration given to operational requirements.
- Details of a compressed work week (for example, breaks, benefits, sick leave, vacation, bereavement leave, etc.) must be coordinated through the Human Resources department and will be confirmed in an employment contract.
- For approval of this arrangement, the employee and supervisor must complete the Alternative Work Arrangement Agreement. In the event the employee transfers to a new position, a new Alternative Work Arrangement Agreement will be created with the new supervisor.
- For unionized employees, the relevant collective agreement describes eligibility and application of the compressed work week arrangement.
- Submit the completed Alternative Work Arrangement Agreement to BenefitsHRC@regionofwaterloo.ca at least 30 days prior to the requested start date of the alternative work arrangement.

Flexible Working Hours

- A core period of work hours must be established.
- A schedule may be pre-established and adhered to (for example, 8:00a.m. to 4:00p.m. daily) or flexible time can be used as required (such as, start and end times could be altered daily, while maintaining both core hours and standard weekly hours).
- Where there are requests from multiple employees for flexible work arrangements, approvals may be rotated on a schedule determined by the department and or division.
- For approval of this arrangement, the employee and supervisor must complete the Alternative Work Arrangement Agreement. In the event the employee transfers to a new position, a new Alternative Work Arrangement Agreement will be created with the new supervisor.
- For unionized employees, the relevant collective agreement describes eligibility and application of the flexible working hours arrangement.

Hybrid Work

- Applies to all employees who hold a position considered by management that for service and operational reasons can be performed at the employee's home.

- A supervisor will consider whether it is appropriate for the position and the employee to have a hybrid work arrangement.
- To ensure the right balance between the delivery of Regional services, providing flexibility to employees, and facilitating team connections, it is expected that employees will work the equivalent of at least two days per week in a Region worksite. Effective December 1, 2025, this will change to:
 - MMS employees – at least three days per week in a Region worksite.
 - All other eligible employees - at least two days per week in a Region worksite.
- Hybrid work arrangements do not change the terms and conditions of employment and employees remain subject to all Regional policies and applicable collective agreement terms and conditions.
- The duties, obligations and responsibilities of the employee are maintained when they work from their home.
- The Region reserves the right to end hybrid work arrangements when necessary to protect the security, integrity and availability of the organization's network and business.
- The supervisor can provide reasonable notice to make changes to the arrangement based on changes to service and operational requirements and or concerns regarding an employee's productivity and performance.
- For approval of this arrangement, the employee and supervisor must complete the Hybrid Work Arrangement Agreement. In the event the employee transfers to a new position, a new Hybrid Work Arrangement Agreement will be created with the new supervisor.

Refer to the [Hybrid Work Arrangement Guidelines](#) for additional information to facilitate hybrid work arrangements for employees.

See also:

- [Applicable Collective Agreement\(s\)](#)
- [Alternative Work Arrangement Agreement](#)
- [Hybrid Work Arrangement Guidelines](#)
- [Hybrid Work Arrangement Agreement](#)
- [Severe Weather Response \(I-20\)](#)
- [Standard Working Hours \(I-26\)](#)

For further information, please contact:

Director, Total Rewards
Human Resources