## Hybrid Office

| Reviewed Date | | Number | OP0108 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Revised Date | December 14, 2022 | Approved Date | March 3, 2010 |

### Introduction

An effective work area is multifunctional and provides an employee with the tools and space to assist them in their work. Providing flexibility in the type of workspace and work location assists the health unit in efficient delivery of programs, effective use of office space, contributes to workplace wellness and work-life balance and supports recommendations to improve health by incorporating healthy design concepts into the office-built environment.

To facilitate this initiative, SMDHU implemented office concepts that include desk-sharing, work from home, unassigned workstations and touch down strategies in order to reduce our office footprint and maximize efficient use of office space. As part of COVID-19 pandemic recovery in 2022, the Hybrid Workplace Plan was implemented with revision to the Work from Home Policy and reorganization of offices to maintain 6 feet distance between workstations. The Hybrid Workplace Plan expanded hybrid work in the agency and applied a new default of unassigned workstations to encourage flexibility for workstation use at the time they are needed.

### Purpose

To maximize effective use of office space thereby improving service delivery and supporting a healthy workplace and work-life balance. Providing a hybrid office approach will result in changes to office design and be balanced with maintaining effective client/customer service. Hybrid offices will allow for more shared use of workstations. The hybrid office concept and office courtesy guidelines apply to employees, volunteers and students (hereafter referred to as staff). The Work from Home Program is outlined in Policy OP0110.

### Legislative Authority

Occupational Health and Safety Act

### Policy Definitions and Interpretations

*HR*:  Human Resources

*Supervisor*: Refers to the individual to whom the employee directly reports.

*Clear Workstation*: A work surface free of clutter that provides adequate work surface for shared use and is left in this condition whenever leaving the workstation at the end of the workday or for extended periods of time (i.e., in meetings, absences).

*Shared Workspace*: More than one employee is assigned to or uses one workstation. Shared workstations include desk sharing unassigned workstations, and touchdown areas.

*Assigned Desk Sharing:* Where more than one employee is assigned to one workstation by their Direct Supervisor.

***Unassigned Workstations (previously known as hoteling desks):*** Workstations that are not permanently assigned and are available to be reserved on an as needed basis. There is an electronic workstation booking app available through Staff Access for staff to reserve a workstation. These workstations are equipped with varied technological setups to support the various needs of staff including laptops, tablets and desk top computer needs.

***Touchdown Area:*** Any unassigned workstation, meeting room, or other wireless workspace located at an office that is available for a short period of time. An unassigned workstation that is not reserved electronically and is unoccupied is considered available as a touchdown area and does not require a reservation, although that is best practice. These work areas provide access to voicemail and email. Touchdown areas are conducive to individuals who have an assigned laptop/tablet and are travelling between offices or who work in the community and need workspace for a short period of time.

***Assigned Workstation:*** One employee is assigned to one desk/office by their Direct Supervisor. Assigned workstations are limited to employees who work at their desk for the majority of their work week.

***Touch Down from Home:*** For those who are not on the Work from Home Program and who may for a variety of reasons request permission to work at home for a portion of or for a full day from their supervisor on an ad hoc basis. Supervisors will consider the request and determine, depending on work assignment and ability to complete work, if they could support such a request. Any employee requesting this on a regular basis should be applying to the Work from Home program.

***Agency Zones:*** Agency zones are specific to the 15 Sperling, Barrie office location. An agency zone refers to the office area where unassigned workstations are not reserved for a particular SMDHU department. Agency zones are intended to be used for overflow and for teams booking workstations together that may not have space in their department zone. Individuals and teams shall only reserve workstations in agency zones after assessing their department zone does not have sufficient space.

***Department Zones:*** Department zones are specific to the 15 Sperling, Barrie office location. A department zone refers to the office area designated for a particular SMDHU department, which may have both assigned and unassigned workstations. Individuals and teams may reserve workstations in their department zone.


### *Policy*

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (The Agency) is committed to moving all offices to a hybrid office concept. The hybrid office is a multifaceted approach to workspace design which supports physical distancing and maximizes effective use of office space through the combined use of assigned workstations, unassigned workstations, agency zones, department zones and touch down spaces. This concept is further enhanced by a voluntary Work from Home Program. In addition, employees are encouraged to consider their activities for the day to minimize travel and time spent going into the office for the sole purpose of email and voicemail access when touching down from home is an option. New employees, students and volunteers will be oriented to the policy as part of the Agency orientation process.


### *Procedures*

**A. Work from the Office:**

1. Employees in a formal Work from Home Program under Policy OP0110 will be required to spend time in their assigned office to support the work they do or may be required to do so as directed by their Direct Supervisor.

2. There are several types of workspaces available to support employees in carrying out their responsibilities. The specific workspace for each individual employee is decided by the Direct Supervisor and takes into consideration the amount of time the employee spends in the office, the nature of the work while in the office, any accommodation requirements and the employee's FTE.

3. If the employee is assigned to a branch office, the Supervisor will also liaise with the Branch Office Lead to determine an appropriate seating arrangement. An employee's workspace in the office may be one or a combination of the following: assigned workstation, unassigned workstation, assigned desk sharing, or touch down area.

4. All workspaces will be kept clear in order to support the use of the space by other individuals.

5. All offices will have secure, wireless connectivity to support mobility.

**B. Shared Workspace:**

1. Management will determine the employees who will be assigned to shared workspaces, including use of unassigned workstations, assigned desk sharing, or touchdown areas. Unassigned workstations are considered the default and the preferred form of shared workspace.

2. The following criteria will be considered when determining staff who will use unassigned workstations or desk share:

   ✓ Employees approved in the Work from Home Program

   ✓ Full time and part time staff who spend most of their time away from the office or workstation on a regular basis

   ✓ Staff whose days of work can be shifted

   ✓ There are no significant ergonomic challenges to sharing a workspace

   ✓ Space constraints

3. Unassigned workstations must be reserved using the Workstation Booking App (Appendix A). At the 15 Sperling, Barrie office location, individuals and/or teams should reserve an unassigned workstation in the following order based on availability: 1) in their department zone 2) in an agency zone and finally 3) in another department zone. Booking and use of Visiting Managers offices in branch offices are outlined in Appendix B

4. Employees who are assigned to a shared workspace may be provided with one secure area for storing of personal possessions and work files as needed.

*Office Courtesy Guidelines*

*Introduction*

Working with colleagues in close proximity and using shared workspace requires respectful attitudes and actions. Demonstrating respect for your fellow colleagues in the workplace helps build a positive work environment which fosters workplace wellness.

***Guidelines:***

1. Maintain a clear workstation.

2. When using a shared workspace, disinfect the workspace and equipment before beginning work.

3. Avoid leaving any personal items at a shared workspace.

4. Cancel unassigned workstation reservations if you no longer need the workspace.

5. Employees sharing a workstation will negotiate what personal décor they have on their desk; however, personal décor should be kept to a minimum.

6. Be conscientious of your colleague's right to privacy. When approaching a work area, knock gently or quietly greet the individual to ask permission before interrupting or entering.

7. Use a quiet voice when speaking to a colleague in a shared workspace area. Whether business or casual conversation be aware of the potential that your conversation may disrupt others and move to a more appropriate space if the conversation will carry on beyond a few minutes. If you have to raise your voice to be heard, you need to move closer to the colleague you're speaking to, while maintaining social distancing in all such situations.

8. Avoid interjections into conversations which you are not directly involved.

9. Maintain confidentiality standards related to all conversations and information.

10. Refrain from use of radios or any music if not using headphone or ear buds. Headphones/ear buds are permitted provided they do not impair ability to carry out work functions.

11. Ask before borrowing your colleague's personal equipment and supplies. Do not open another colleague's desk drawer without permission.

12. Refrain from taking group breaks in a workspace area where fellow colleagues are trying to work.

13. Avoid the use of [scents](scents).

14. When away from your desk utilize the "send all calls" option on your telephone and log out of your computer.

15. Ensure cell phones are on vibrate.

16. Avoid using speaker phone when colleagues are within distance to be disturbed by your call.

17. Teleconferencing/webcasting should be conducted from a private workspace (i.e., meeting room) or if done at a workstation, a headset must be used.

18. Whenever possible, employees, students and volunteers are encouraged to problem solve any conflicts with their colleagues before proceeding to their Supervisor for assistance.

*Forms*

*Related Policies*

FI0101 Travel Conservation & Reimbursement
HS0119 Cleaning and Disinfection of Non-Critical Multi-Use Device/Equipment
IM0101 Personal Health Information Privacy Policy
IM0108 Information Privacy and Security Incident Management Policy
IM0110 Records Management
OP0110 Work from Home Policy
TQ0101 Electronic Monitoring and Acceptable Use of SMDHU IT equipment Policy
TQ0103 Email and Voicemail Access from Home
TQ0104 Remote Access to Agency Network
TQ0107 Use of Portable Electronic Storage Devices

**Final Approval Signature:** _____

*Review/Revision History*:

Revised – December 14, 2022, Renamed from Innovative Office and adapted for the Hybrid Workplace Plan implementation. Additional changes made to definitions and new terminology added.

Revised – October 12, 2016
Revised – April 24, 2013
Revised – August 10, 2011

## *Appendix A: Workstation Booking How to Guide*

### *Creating a Reservation*

1.  There are several ways to access the app; choose the appropriate one:

    a.  **On your work laptop:** You can find the Workspace Booking icon on your desktop

    

    b.  **On your work provided phone:** You can find the SMDHU Workspace Booking "app" on your home screen.
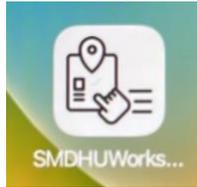
    

    c.  **On a Personal device**: Navigate to the staff access web page (http://smdhu.org/staffaccess), you can bookmark this page using one of the following instructions:

        i.  Desktop:
            1.  Open the page in your browser.
            2.  Click and hold the lock symbol next to the URL.
            3.  Pull the website shortcut onto your desktop.

        ii. Phone or tablet: https://www.howtogeek.com/196087/how-to-add-websites-to-the-home-screen-on-any-smartphone-or-tablet/

2.  Click on the link for Workspace Bookings

    

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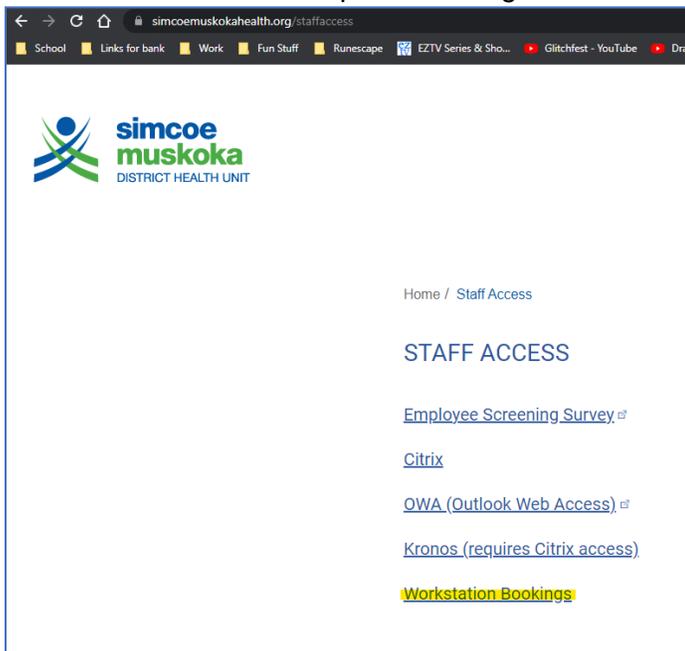
3. Start by selecting the Date, Start Time, and End time for your reservation



4. Select the location (Office)



5. You can now select a desk from the dropdown list or by clicking an available Workstation on the map. If the map is too small you can zoom in to enlarge the image. You will not be able to select a desk that is not available during your selected time range.

6. Click Confirm, this will create the reservation in your Outlook Calendar and redirect you to the My Reservations page, where you will be able to see any upcoming reservations.

### *Updating or cancelling a reservation*
1. Make your way to the Workstations Booking page following step 1 and 2 of the Creating a reservation instruction above.

2. Click on *My Reservations*



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3. To *Modify* a reservation click *edit* and follow steps 3-6 from the Creating a reservation instruction above.



4. To *remove* a reservation click *delete* on the right of the reservation.



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## *Appendix B       Parameters for Use of Visiting Manager's Offices*

**Background**

For the purpose of this document, the term 'visiting manager' will refer to a visiting Manager, Supervisor or Vice President

Visiting Manager's Offices (VMO's) have been established in health unit offices to support the presence of the Branch Office Lead or a visiting MOH, AMOH, Vice President manager, Supervisor or Human Resources in an office to engage with and supervise staff and to provide a quiet and confidential workspace for visiting Supervisors to carry out management functions. As a secondary function, the VMO's, when not in use by a visiting Manager, can be utilized as a small meeting space for program staff.

**Booking Process**

Booking by visiting Supervisors: There is an electronic reservation system in Outlook for visiting Supervisors to reserve a VMO. A visiting Supervisor may book the VMO in advance; however, similar to an unassigned workstation, the VMO should only be booked for the date and time that the visiting Supervisor intends to work in the office.

Booking by staff: The VMO is available for use by staff <u>only</u> when not in use by a visiting Supervisor. Although staff may book the VMO in advance, a visiting Supervisor's request will supersede a staff booking. Program Assistants are responsible for informing a staff member if their booking has been cancelled.

**Considerations:**

- The visiting Supervisor is not obligated to use the VMO if another available workstation (i.e., unassigned workstation) is suitable to their needs.
- The visiting Supervisor should try to be reasonable and flexible in accommodating staff booking of the VMO by utilizing other available workstations if possible.