



Blouberg Municipality



CHAPTER 9: WORKING HOURS AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

STATUS: As adopted on the 29 May 2025

1. PREAMBLE

All staff members shall work such hours and days in accordance with the operational needs and requirements of the Municipality, which shall not be less than forty (40) hours, and not more than forty-four (44) hours, per week. The Municipality also commits to ensuring that its staff members are able to balance their private and professional demands, enhance their quality of life and increase their job satisfaction.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose is to regulate and manage normal working hours as well as flexible work hours for staff members in order to balance working hours with personal commitments.

3. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This policy applies to all staff members of the Municipality, and varies among departments and as per the natures of their employment contracts.

4. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996)
- Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)
- Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act No. 117 of 1998)
- Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003)
- Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act No. 66 of 1995)
- Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997 (Act No. 75 of 1997)

5. DEFINITIONS

All terminology used in this policy shall bear the same meaning as in the Regulations or applicable legislation, or as defined and / or explained in the Glossary of Terminology in the Human Resources Policies Manual.

6. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Late coming and knocking off earlier has become a bad organisational culture to Municipal staff

7. POLICY PROVISIONS

7.1 Temporary Staff members

The working hours for temporary staff members are regulated by the provisions contained in their contracts of employment, read with schedules and / or annexures attached thereto, as may be varied in writing from time to time.

7.2 Permanent Staff members

7.2.1 Normal Working Hours

- (a)** Normal working hours are from 07h45 to 16h30, from Mondays to Fridays.
- (b)** Staff members are required to work a minimum of eight (8) hours, and up to a maximum of nine (9) hours, daily.
- (c)** Staff members shall take a one (1) hour lunch break daily, which does not accumulate, whether or not the staff member takes it.
- (d)** The lunch hour break shall not be used in lieu of leaving work early or coming to work late.
- (e)** In order to enhance sufficient operations in the office, lunch breaks shall be scheduled from 13h00 to 14h00 and depending on the operational arrangements from the Head of the Department.
- (f)** Time off for personal matters shall be worked in by all staff members and arrangements in this regard shall be agreed to by line managers and/or the Municipal Manager before time off for personal matters are taken.

7.2.2 Flexible Work Arrangements

- (a)** The Municipality may, by mutual agreement, make arrangements with a staff member to work flexible hours, provided the nature of the staff member's work and the Municipality's operational requirements allows for it.

- (b) Staff members who need flexible work arrangements shall present their circumstances to their respective line managers and/or Municipal Manager in order to establish their needs and eligibility, and approval.
- (c) Arrangement, agreement to, approval of and continuation of flexible work arrangements shall be the sole and entire discretion of the Municipality and shall be in writing and consented to by the staff member, line manager, and/or the Municipal Manager, and furthermore placed on staff member's personnel file at the HRM Unit.
- (d) The minimum working hours for a normal working day shall apply throughout, and approval may be withdrawn should the staff member fail to comply with it.

7.3 Tele-Work

7.3.1 Arrangements

The Municipality may, by mutual agreement, make arrangements with a staff member to work from home, provided the nature of the staff member's work and the Municipality's operational requirements allows for it.

7.3.2 Applications

Applications in these regards shall be considered in the same manner as in flexible working arrangements, as well as the following:

- (a) Staff members working from home are compelled to attend weekly management meetings and monthly staff meetings.
- (b) Staff members are expected to honour requests to report to the office.
- (c) The maximum days working from home shall not exceed two (2) days per week.
- (d) The staff member's permanent workstation at the office shall be maintained.

7.3.3 Absence due to Sickness

Leave of absence shall apply to working from home in the same manner that it applies to working normally from office.

7.3.4 Deliverables

Working from home does not allow direct, full-time supervision, and therefore the management of deliverables shall apply through use of project schedules, key milestones, regular status reports, and team reviews in order to evaluate the staff member's performance.

7.3.5 Qualifying criteria

On receiving a request to work from home, the line manager shall assess the staff member's application against the following criteria:

- (a) work that does not require frequent input from other colleagues;
- (b) ability to cope with additional pressures or working at home where the demands of family life are hard to ignore;
- (c) self-motivation;
- (d) self-reliance and discipline to work towards deadlines;
- (e) initiative, flexibility and time management skills;
- (f) ability to deal with reduced social contact and isolation;
- (g) a high degree of written rather than manual work; and
- (h) work is to be performed on an individual basis or with clearly defined areas of individual work which has clearly defined objectives and can be subject to performance measurement.

7.3.6 Equipment

The Municipality shall provide staff members working from home with the following tools and/or resources to enable them to execute their tasks effectively:

- (a) Laptop / Notebook / Tablet.
- (b) Mobile data device / card / router.
- (c) Technological device providing them legal remote access to the Municipality server.
- (d) Mobile phone (Cellular phone).
- (e) Software that enables virtual meetings, uploading of documents, and collaboration on documents.

7.3.7 Hours of work

- (a)** When a staff member working from home reports at the permanent place of work, he/she shall do so by no later than 09h00, and shall be permitted to leave after 15h00.
- (b)** Staff members working from home shall not be eligible for overtime pay.

7.3.8 Extraordinary circumstances

Remote working may be allowed when extraordinary circumstances in the Municipality, province, or the whole country prevails. Such circumstances shall be officially pronounced by the Council, and shall include but not limited to, highest alert levels accompanying the declarations of the state of national or provincial disasters, cross-border detached duty, and so on.

7.4 Time clocking for all staff members

7.4.1 Official time of records

- (a)** The electronic time keeping system and associated work records shall become the official basis for recording hours worked for all staff members of the Municipality.
- (b)** HRM Unit shall submit staff member information to the salaries office when a staff member is newly appointed, or when a staff member had a change in employment status (e.g. exempt from clocking), has resigned or has been terminated.
- (c)** Department-handwritten timesheets shall be reconciled against the electronically generated timesheets (based on the data in the clocking system).
- (d)** To ensure consistency of treatment of all staff members, the data recorded in the time clock system, together with the hand-written time sheets, shall be considered as the "official" record of the workday.
- (e)** All staff members shall co-operate to clock in at the beginning of the working day / shift, and clock out at the end of the working day/shift.
- (f)** Manual / hand-written time and attendance sheets shall be maintained at workplaces where electronic clocking readers have not been installed.

7.4.2 Staff member time of reports

- (a) The electronic timekeeping system shall be used to record all hours worked and leave taken during the reporting period for all personnel. Notwithstanding the use of the clocking system, the requirement to request approval for leave, and to complete the actual leave form for each category of leave taken and seek approval thereof prior to commencing the leave, shall still apply.
- (b) The time and attendance reports shall reflect all regular as well as additional hours worked during the period, including leave, compensatory time, holidays, etc.
- (c) Adjustments to hours and leave shall be posted weekly by the time keeping officials in the responsible department to avoid errors and omissions that may occur if these adjustments are posted toward the end of the payroll period.
- (d) All days (Monday through to Friday) that are not considered workdays shall be termed holidays. Holiday credit hours shall not count toward the overtime limits.
- (e) Meal intervals are not regarded as working time and shall therefore be excluded when calculating time worked.

7.4.3 Daily clocking-in / out requirements

- (a) All staff members shall "clock-in" in the morning and "clock-out" at the end of the workday, or end of overtime, at their place of work.
- (b) Under certain conditions, such as training at an off-site location, extracurricular events, etc., the staff member shall report time worked to time keeping officials in the responsible department and immediate supervisor so that their time worked can be manually entered in the departmental time register.
- (c) Staff members are expected to clock in and out on their scheduled times as prescribed by Council and relevant for that workplace, and shall report to the supervisor at the start of the workday.
- (d) Working outside the stipulated working times, either intentionally or carelessly, shall not be allowed unless pre-authorized by management.
- (e) Staff members shall not be allowed to clock out before the end of the workday, or before stopping work.

7.4.4 Tampering with the clocking system

HRM Unit shall review incidents of tampering with the clocking system, and institute appropriate disciplinary or corrective measures. Incidents in this regard are, but not limited to:

- (a) Tampering, or attempting to tamper, with the clocking / time-keeping hardware or software.
- (b) Clocking-in for an absent or late staff member or colleague (also known as "buddy clocking").
- (c) Interference with other staff members' use of the Time Clocking System.
- (d) Unauthorised changes to any staff member's clocking times.

7.4.5 Clocking problems

- (a) If a staff member is unable to clock in or out because of a time clock malfunction or accidental oversight, it shall be the staff member's responsibility to immediately inform the time keeping official in the responsible department and/or supervisor.
- (b) In this situation, the time keeping official in the responsible department shall "manually" register the staff member in or out in the departmental register and/or time sheets.
- (c) The time keeping official in the responsible department shall then notify HRM Unit of the clocking problems experienced.
- (d) Staff members shall be required to report the clocking system's memory loss, and loss of fingerprint contact, to HRM Unit.

7.4.6 Processing of electronic time reports

- (a) The salaries office shall close the work month in time clocking system according to a pre-set schedule to ensure that time adjustments and leave taken are properly recorded.
- (b) Time keeping officials in the responsible department shall, therefore, resolve all missed shifts, leave taken, holidays, on or before the date set for time sheets to be handed in.
- (c) Each supervisor or designee shall prepare print-outs of all time sheets, for the period identified and in the correct format, from the time clocking system and request each staff member to review and sign next to their name.

- (d) If the supervisor or assignee is satisfied with the hours reported, he / she shall sign the electronic time sheet as well and submit it to the salaries office by due date as set in publicised submission schedules.
- (e) To ensure accuracy, time keeping officials in the responsible department, in collaboration with supervisors / heads of department, shall provide staff members with the opportunity to review their electronic timesheet before the payroll due date as stipulated by the finance department.

7.4.7 Deductions from pay

- (a) If a staff member is absent and has used up all available leave, sick and/or injury on duty, compensatory time, etc., their pay shall be reduced for the hours missed based on their hourly rate of pay.
- (b) If compensatory time is available, the salaries office shall deduct the necessary hours to meet the workable hour threshold for that week.

7.4.8 Clocking time for supervisors

- (a) Heads of Department shall monitor and verify the time and attendance records of all supervisors in their respective departments.
- (b) Time data information for each supervisor shall be approved in writing (signature) on the electronic as well as the manual time sheets (departmental registers).
- (c) The two documents shall be reconciled with each other and any differences shall be attended to before submission to the finance department.

7.5 Absence

Staff members are considered absent from work when not available for the assigned work schedule, regardless of the reason.

7.5.1 Scheduled Absences

- (a) Staff members shall notify their supervisors as early as possible regarding scheduling time off from work, whether paid or unpaid.
- (b) Scheduled absences shall be arranged at the mutual convenience of the department and staff member, based on operational circumstances.

- (c) Absence shall be considered scheduled when a 24-hour notice is given in advance, and the absence is approved by the supervisor.

7.5.2 Unscheduled Absences

- (a) Should a staff member miss work due to an unscheduled absence (e.g. calling-in sick), he/she shall follow prescribed leave procedure in that regard, whose condoning or *post facto* approval shall be at the sole discretion of the supervisor.
- (b) Failure to follow the prescribed procedure may result into instituting disciplinary action.
- (c) Ten consecutive days of unscheduled absence, and failure to notify and obtain approval shall be considered as absconding and the staff member's services can be terminated effective from the day following the last day of work.

7.5.3 Excessive Unscheduled Absences

- (a) Excessive unscheduled absences shall result in instituting disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- (b) Supervisors shall notify a staff member when patterns or concerns develop that may place them at risk of being reprimanded.
- (c) The following factors shall be considered in determining if unscheduled absences are excessive:
 - (i) A pattern of absence demonstrating a predictable routine, such as where a staff member is consistently absent the day after pay day, or a particular day, e.g. Monday or Friday, or always on the day before or after a holiday, etc.
 - (ii) Frequency of absence, or repeated instances of unscheduled absences, such as call-ins, early departures, not reporting etc., can be regarded as excessive unscheduled absences even though the absences may not constitute a pattern.

7.5.4 Tardiness

- (a) A staff member shall be considered tardy when he/she fails to report to the assigned work area at the scheduled time. This includes returning from body breaks and lunch breaks.

- (b) Departments shall define punctuality standards for their operations and are responsible for communicating them to staff members.
- (c) Staff members who expect to be late shall notify their supervisors in line with department-specific work procedures.
- (d) Staff members shall not extend a normal working day to make up for being tardy without supervisors' approval.

7.6 Roles and responsibilities

7.6.1 The Municipal Manager or his / her delegated assignee(s) accept overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the policy. The financial implications related to implementing this policy shall be qualified and quantified by Human Resource Management Unit.

7.6.2 Heads of Department, or their assignees, shall:

- (a) Appoint time keeping officials in their respective departments to process time sheets.
- (b) Authorise time keeping officials in their respective departments to change / edit or review time sheets daily, where necessary.
- (c) Sign time sheets where changes / editing was done.
- (d) Direct requests for training on processing timekeeping reports to HRM Unit, and ensure training is provided when needed.
- (e) Print out the time and attendance reports on a regular basis and check any irregularities or suspicious patterns and investigate them in a timely manner where warranted.
- (f) Report any change of status of a staff member (e.g. absence without leave, absconding, death, etc.) to the HRM Unit.

8. POLICY MONITORING AND EVALUATION

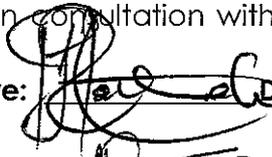
- 8.1** This policy shall be implemented and effective once recommended by the Local Labour Forum and approved by Council.
- 8.2** Non-compliance to the stipulations contained in this policy shall be regarded as breach of Code of Conduct, which shall be dealt with in terms of the Code of Conduct.

8.3 Head of Corporate Services shall carry out the monitoring and evaluation of the policy's implementation.

9. POLICY APPROVAL

This policy was formulated by HR Management in consultation with the Local Labour Forum.

Authorised by Municipal Manager:

Signature:  Date: 29/05/2025

Recommended by Portfolio Committee on Corporate Services:

Signature:  Date: 29/05/2025

Approved by Municipal Council:

Signature:  Date: 29/05/2025