



London
CANADA

Disconnecting from Work

Procedure Name: Disconnecting from Work

Revision History: N/A

Last Review Date: June 2, 2022

Service Area Lead: Director, People Services

1. Procedure Statement

- 1.1 The Corporation of the City of London (“City”) values the health and well-being of our employees. Disconnecting from work helps us achieve a healthy and sustainable work-life balance. We want to create an inclusive environment encouraging your wellness, so you feel supported, safe, engaged, motivated and respected.
- 1.2 This procedure supports you in your ability to disconnect from work outside of your normal hours of work, subject to the exceptions noted in section 4.2 below.
- 1.3 This procedure is subject to and interpreted according to all applicable legislation, including Ontario’s *Employment Standards Act, 2000* (“ESA”), the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (“OHSA”), the *Human Rights Code* (“Code”), collective agreements, City policies and procedures, and complies with the *Working for Workers Act, 2021* (“WWA”).

2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Disconnecting from work:** Means not engaging in work-related communications, including emails, telephone calls, video calls or sending or reviewing other messages, to be free from the performance of work.
- 2.2 **Normal Hours of Work:** Hours of work are set by the City and may vary by Service Area, Division and Section based on operational requirements and the services provided to our community and clients. Your hours of work are defined by practice, an employment contract or by collective agreement terms.

3. Applicability

- 3.1 This procedure applies to all employees of the City.

4. The Procedure

4.1 General

- a) We respect our employees’ needs to disconnect from work outside of normal hours of work.
- b) We encourage you to review and follow the information contained within this procedure to ensure you take the time to disconnect from work when it is appropriate to do so.
- c) You will not be penalized or face reprisal for complying with this procedure.
- d) The roles and responsibilities of our people leaders and employees are outlined below.

- e) This procedure is consistent with and does not change employee rights and entitlements under other ESA rules and regulations, including:
- Hours of Work and Eating Periods
 - Vacation with Pay
 - Public Holiday rules
 - The rules in Ontario Regulation 285/01 that establish when work is “deemed” to be performed.

As an employer, we have an obligation to follow the rules under the ESA unless exemptions or special rules apply.

4.2 Exceptions

- a) Due to the nature of the services we provide, work outside of established normal hours of work may be required from time to time.
- b) Occasionally you may need to be contacted outside your normal hours of work due to:
- Unforeseen situations
 - An emergency
 - When operational requirements require
 - Helping or filling in on short notice
 - Other unusual incidents as they arise
 - If your position requires work or work-related communications outside of your normal hours of work
- c) Overtime, on-call, or standby according to applicable collective agreements or established procedures.

4.3 Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Leadership Team

- Ensure all employees are encouraged to disconnect from work in accordance with this procedure.
- Show support, lead by example, and respect the needs of others to disconnect.
- Communicate with your Service Areas to review the best ways to disconnect from work.

Managers and Supervisors

- Take necessary steps allowing employees to disconnect from work outside of their normal hours of work subject to the exceptions in section 4.2 above.
- Be open to communication from your employees related to this procedure, listen to their concerns and try to provide resolutions.
- Regularly evaluate expectations, workload, and productivity.
- Provide employees with information regarding exceptions where they may be required to work outside of their normal hours of work.
- Be aware of and clearly communicate the hours of work for your Service Areas and Sections.
- Ensure your employees take allotted breaks.
- Avoid penalizing or taking actions of reprisal against employees who have questions about this procedure or request compliance with it. Reasonable direction and corrective actions are not considered reprisal.

Employees

- Avoid checking communications outside of normal hours of work.
- Communicate with your Manager or Supervisor if you have problems maintaining a work-life balance.
- Be mindful of the needs of others to disconnect.
- Take allotted breaks and vacation time.
- Be aware when you may be required to work as outlined in the Exceptions section 4.2 above.
- Notify your Manager or Supervisor if you feel pressure to respond to issues outside of your normal hours of work.

People Services

- Provide guidance and support in administering this procedure.
- Provide new employees with a copy of this procedure within 30 days of their start date.
- Review and amend this procedure annually or as may be required within the current year.
- Provide all employees with an amended version of this procedure within 30 days of the amendment.
- Retain a copy of this and any revised version of this procedure for three years after it ceases to be in effect.

4.4 Communications, Meetings and Calls

- a) We do not want you to feel obligated to send or respond to messages when you are not working. Work-related communications should be sent and reviewed during normal hours of work, subject to the exceptions in section 4.2 above.
- b) As some employees have different working hours, you may receive work-related communications outside your normal hours of work. Subject to 4.2 above, there is no expectation you will respond until you return to work.
- c) Meetings and calls, both in-person and virtual, should be booked during normal hours of work, subject to the exceptions in section 4.2 above.
- d) For additional tips on handling communications, meetings, and calls, refer to Appendix A: Disconnecting from Work Tips and Appendix B: Technical Tips.

4.5 Mental Health Support

- a) Recognizing disconnecting from work plays an important role in managing mental health, we will assist and support your mental health by:
 - Promoting work-life balance
 - Recognizing mental health is equally important as physical health in ensuring a safe and healthy workplace
 - Minimizing work-related sources of stress as much as possible
 - Providing access to supportive people, resources, and programs (e.g., LifeSpeak, LifeWorks, Wellness Wednesdays)

4.6 Questions and Concerns

- a) Talk to your Manager or Supervisor if you have any questions or concerns about this procedure.
- b) If your question or concern cannot be resolved, you can bring the issue forward to People Services for further discussion.

4.7 Review

- a) This procedure will be reviewed at least annually ensuring it remains current, relevant, and complies with the ESA, OHSA, Code, and the WWA.

4.8 Related Resources

- [Use of Technology Administrative Procedure](#)
- [Employment Standards Act, 2000](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)
- Ontario [Human Rights Code](#)
- [Working for Workers Act, 2021](#)

Appendix A: Disconnecting from Work Tips

Communications/Calls

- Use notifications or out of office replies to indicate a response time for returning messages if you are away or busy.
- If sending an email during off-hours, include wording in your email letting the recipient know a response can wait until their normal hours of work have resumed. For example, "I am sending this email to you during off-hours. I do not expect you to respond to it outside your normal hours of work."
- Place calls, send and check emails during normal hours of work
- If sending an email during off-hours, use the tags box in your drafted email to set a "Do not deliver before" date. This delays the delivery of your message to a date and hour you set, so it can be sent during normal hours of work.

Meetings

- Schedule during normal hours of work whenever possible
- Avoid scheduling during breaks or lunch periods
- Include only those who are needed, who play an active role, or are directly involved operationally
- Be prepared, have an agenda, use the meeting time effectively

Managing Workload

- Complete your work and respond to work-related communications during your normal hours of work.
- Block off time in your calendar to complete tasks or reply to communications
- Change your online status to "busy"
- Prioritize your work in order of importance
- Break work down into manageable pieces
- Aim for one workday without meetings
- Take allotted breaks and schedule them in your calendar

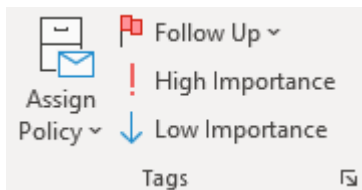
If you have tried the above suggestions and are unable to complete your work or work-related communications during your normal hours of work or have questions, we encourage you to reach out to your Manager, Supervisor or People Services.

Additionally, contacting the Service Desk for technical support on setting up rules, changing your online status, or using other features is helpful. You can also refer to Appendix B: Technical Tips.

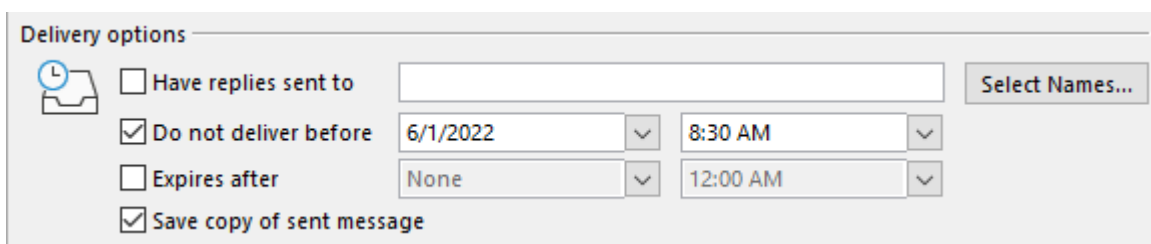
Appendix B: Technical Tips

A. Set a “Do not deliver before” date for email messages

1. While composing an email message, select the **More options** arrow from the **Tags** group in the Ribbon.



2. Under **Delivery options**, select the **Do not deliver before** check box, and then click the delivery date and time you want.

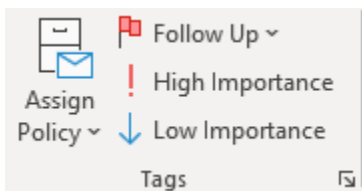


3. Click **Close**.
4. When you are done composing your email message, select **Send**.

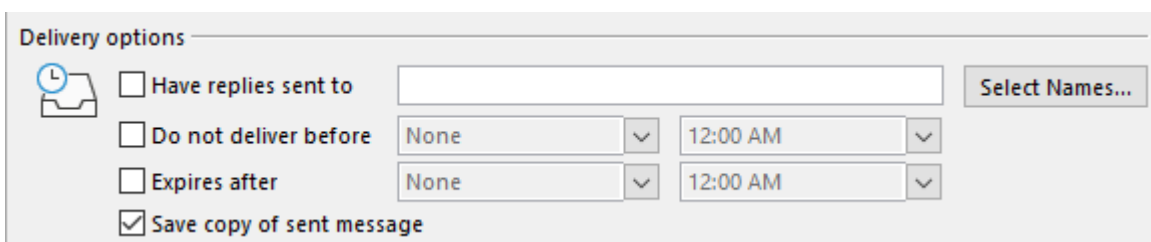
After you click **Send**, the email message remains in the **Outbox** folder until the delivery time.

B. Change a delayed “Do not deliver before” date to send the email message immediately

1. Switch to the **Outbox** folder.
2. Open the delayed message.
3. Select the **More options** arrow for the **Tags** group in the Ribbon.



4. Under **delivery options**, clear the **Do not deliver before** check box.

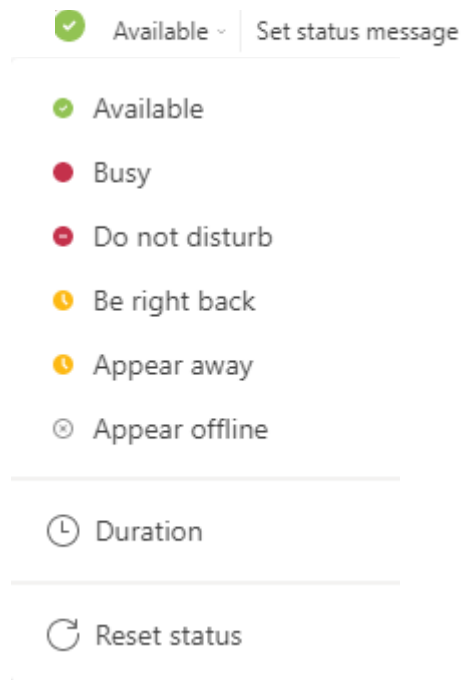


5. Click **Close** and **Send**.

C. Change your status in Teams

Teams automatically sets the status in some cases, (e.g., when you are in a call). To let people know what your status is in Teams, you can update your status yourself. The little dot in your profile tells people if you are available or not.

1. Click on your profile picture in the top right corner of your screen.
2. Click on your status to bring up the status menu.



3. Click on the status you want to use.

You can also update your status by typing, “available, busy, dnd, brb, away, or offline”, directly into the command box at the top of your screen.

4. The following outlines each status you can change:

- **Available** is when you are active in Teams and do not have anything in your calendar (no meetings or calls, for example). Note that Teams will automatically set your status from “Available” to “Away” when you lock your computer or when it enters idle or sleep mode. On mobile, this will happen when the Teams app is in the background.
- **Busy** is when you want to focus on something, and you **do want notifications** to pop up. If you are in a meeting or call, Teams will automatically change your status to “In a meeting” or “In a call (Busy)” when not set to “Do not disturb”.
- **Do not disturb** is when you want to focus or present your screen and **do not want notifications** to pop up.
- **Be right back** is when you want to say you are temporarily away. It is never set automatically.
- **Appear away** is when you need to work without responding right away.
- **Appear offline** is when you want to indicate you are not signed in to Teams, so will not be responding until you are back online. You will still receive notifications if anyone messages you.

D. Delay delivery of all email messages by up to two hours by creating a rule

1. Click **File**.
2. Click **Manage Rules and Alerts**.
3. Click **New Rule**.
4. In the **Step 1: Select a template** box, under **Start from a Blank Rule**, click **Apply rule on messages I send**, and then click **Next**.
5. In the **Step 1: Select condition(s)** list, select the check boxes for any options you want, and then click **Next**.

If you do not select any check boxes, a confirmation dialog box appears. If you click **Yes**, the rule that you are creating is applied to all messages you send.

6. In the **Step 1: Select action(s)** list, select the **defer delivery by a number of minutes** check box.
7. In the **Step 2: Edit the rule description (click an underlined value)** box, click the underlined phrase **a number of** and enter the number of minutes for which you want the messages to be held before it is sent. Delivery can be delayed up to 120 minutes.
8. Click **OK**, and then click **Next**.
9. Select the check boxes for any exceptions that you want.
10. Click **Next**.
11. In the **Step 1: Specify a name for this rule** box, type a name for the rule.
12. Select the **Turn on this rule** check box.
13. Click **Finish**.

After you click **Send**, each message remains in the **Outbox** folder for the time you specified.