



FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULES

What is it?

Flexible work schedules is an employer policy that allows for members of the work force to start and stop work at varying times of the day. This results in the reduction of traffic congestion during peak driving hours. Flexible work schedules embrace a wide variety of formats. Some of the more recognizable are:

- 🕒 **staggered hours** - People are scheduled to start/stop work at different times during the day.
- 🕒 **compressed work week** - 40 hours are worked in less than five full days.
- 🕒 **flextime** - Core hours are established for all employees with flexibility in starting and ending times revolving around the core time, at the employer's or employee's option.

This Action Item can be implemented as a

- POLICY
- ORDINANCE
- PROGRAM



Shared Impact and Benefits

- Motor vehicle emission volumes for any given time decrease, due to decreased engine idling.
- Air quality potentially improves due to the reductions in emissions, and better air quality promotes better health.
- As implementation becomes widespread, commute times are decreased due to reduced congestion and improved traffic flow.
- Business service hours are extended without overtime or hiring costs.
- Absenteeism is reduced when employees are given greater flexibility in their schedules to take care of personal needs.
- Productivity increases because employee work schedules are arranged around the hours they tend to be most productive.
- Work schedules that better fit lifestyle needs results in increased employee satisfaction.

Costs

If individual employees are scheduled to work the same number of hours, just at different times, then there should be no significant additional costs incurred by the business.

How long does this take to implement?

Flexible work schedules can be implemented as soon as is practical and agreeable between employers and employees. Smaller businesses can generally implement these policies faster than larger ones.

The Bottom Line

- Flexible work hours create a less stressful and often more productive work environment. The arrangement is an attractive benefit to employees as it gives them greater freedom to work and manage their lives. It also helps them to avoid peak traffic times.
- As commuter traffic concentrations are lowered, so are harmful concentrations of automobile emissions, and air quality improves. The program requires no funding, is easy to implement and benefits businesses and their communities.

Interested? Read on!



Who needs to be involved in implementation?

Employers (or their representatives) and employees

Resources

Department of Labor
Flexible Schedules
<http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/workhours/flexibleschedules.htm>

Action Steps

1. Determine if your business can operate with flexible work schedules.
2. Determine which variation of flexible work schedules best fits your business.
3. Develop policies that identify job categories suitable for alternative work schedules, what employees must do to qualify for alternative schedules, and how it will be reviewed.
4. Develop standard agreements between employees and managers (A sample agreement is attached).
5. Develop appropriate performance measures for employees working alternative work schedules.
6. Structure schedules to ensure adequate coverage of client services.
7. Offer the flexible schedule possibilities to your employees.
8. Allow for flexibility and experimentation during the initial phase of implementation; it may take adjustments in the schedules initially selected to develop the best plan for the organization.

Basic Information

- Careful and thoughtful consideration is essential to a successful flexible work schedule.
- Not every work situation is conducive to such scheduling, especially where essential services or "services on demand" are involved.
- Flexible work schedules are intended to offer variations for the mutual benefit of the employee and the organization.
- The two requirements of any flexible work schedule program are: (1) each employee must be present during core time (if the organization has required core time); and (2) the employee must work the number of hours for which he/she has contracted; for example, a 40-hour week in the case of a full-time employee, or a lesser number of hours for a part-time employee.
- Supervisors can use flexible work schedules as a tool to build employee self-sufficiency and initiative, or may choose to simply view the flexible work schedules as a rearrangement of work hours.
- Flexible schedules place more responsibility on both the supervisor and the employees and require a greater measure of trust and confidence between the parties.

Tracking Progress

Let Centralina Council of Governments know when you have implemented this action by contacting Carol Lewis at (704) 348-2730 or clewis@centralina.org so that we can document regional efforts.



Who's doing this?

- The federal government, City of Charlotte, Centralina Council of Governments, SC-DHEC, Catawba Regional Council of Governments, Philip Morris, Texas Instruments, Levi Strauss & Co. and many other public and private sector employers utilize flexible schedules.
- Many smaller businesses and organizations use flexible hours as a matter of course to make best use of their total employee staff-hours.
- This action is well-suited for implementation by employers of almost any size or type, public or private.



FAQ's

Q: How much will this program cost?

A: There should not be a labor cost related to this since you are not increasing your work force or work hours of any individual. There is a possibility of increased heating/cooling or lighting costs if your organization currently adheres to strict policies of heat/cooling adjustments and "lights off" except during regular working hours.

Q: How will this help my business?

A: This practice can attract a wider range of candidates, thereby giving employers more selection among qualified candidates. It can also serve as a retention tool for your current work force.

Q: What do other employers think about this practice?

A: Small business owners see advantages in being able to compete with larger businesses for qualified employees. Another advantage is the ability to share time on expensive equipment or even on office space if your business can be structured that way. Large businesses such as Bank of America see it as a motivational tool and a way to retain employees.

Intersecting Interests



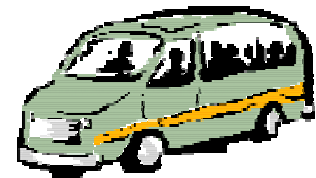
ENHANCED OZONE AWARENESS

Flexible work hours tend to reduce the heavy concentrations of ozone-forming emissions associated with peak commuter traffic, because more workers are freed up to commute during non-peak hours. Additionally, the overall volume of automobile emissions are reduced because commuter traffic is less clogged, idling (a major source of NOx emissions) is reduced and everyone's commute time is shortened.



EFFICIENT PARKING

Flexible work hours may contribute to a need for reduced parking spaces, if the organization does not have a requirement for core time, during which all employees must be on site. If organizations are able to reduce their need for paved parking areas in this manner, they are contributing to a reduction in urban heat island effects, and decreasing non-point source pollution from runoff.



CARPPOOLING/ VANPOOLING

Large organizations may find that their work force is large enough to support both active carpooling/vanpooling programs and flexible work scheduling. Mid- and small-size organizations may wish to weigh the extent to which flexible work hours may make a carpooling/vanpooling program difficult to implement.



For More Information

US Department of Labor - <http://www.dol.gov/>



“The North Carolina Air Awareness Handbook”, p. D-5,6
<http://daq.state.nc.us/airaware/coalition/aahandbook.pdf>



Sample Agreement

DAILY WORKING AGREEMENT

I, _____, request my daily standard working
hours be
_____ A.M. to _____ P.M.

Employee

Section Director

Executive Director

A.M. – Between the hours of 7:30 & 9:00

P.M. – Between the hours of 4:00 & 5:30