

# TELEWORK POLICY TEMPLATE

Teleworking, or telecommuting, is the concept of working from home or another location on a full-time or part-time basis. Employer offers this work alternative when it makes sense for both Employer and the employees.

Employer has established a program to examine how teleworking can contribute to organizational objectives and employee well-being. These guidelines offer direction for teleworkers, employees not currently teleworking, and management.

## Purpose

Teleworking, the practice of working at home for a limited number of days instead of working in Employer office, is a work alternative that Employer offers to some employees when it is advantageous to both Employer and the employee. Teleworking is a work place strategy that helps employees balance the demands of their work and personal lives. Teleworking is a workplace strategy and not an employee right.

An employee's compensation, benefits, work status, and work responsibilities will not change due to participation in the teleworking program. Teleworking employees must comply with all organizational rules, policies and procedures.

## Eligibility

Candidates for teleworking must be a full-time Employer employee with a history of satisfactory or better job performance ratings. The opportunity to telework must be approved by an employee's supervisor, who is ultimately responsible for decisions to continue or discontinue teleworking by the employee, following appropriate notification to the teleworker.

Selection of employees to participate in the Teleworking Program shall be based on specific, written, work-related criteria including:

- ▶ Employee responsibilities
- ▶ Need for, and nature of, interaction with other staff and external clients
- ▶ Need for use of specialized equipment
- ▶ Availability of other qualified employees on-site
- ▶ Employee job performance

An employee that is considered for teleworking must be able to work independently, be a self-starter, and demonstrate skills managing time in a productive manner. An employee must have a satisfactory or better performance level with no record of performance or conduct issues. The resources that an employee needs to do his/her job must be easily transportable or available electronically.

The decision to allow an employee to telework will be made by the employee's supervisor in consultation with Human Resources.

Eligibility and suitability of employees to participate in teleworking will vary among departments and business units, depending on the function and responsibilities of the employee. Each department must maintain some minimum complement of employees who work on-site at the Employer office in order to function effectively.

Teleworking is not an alternative to child or elder care and, when applicable, the teleworker must make appropriate arrangements for dependent care.

## **Schedules and Hours**

Telework hours may be different from office work hours, however, teleworkers and their manager must agree on the designated work hours. A regular teleworking schedule, including specific days and hours, must be established by the teleworker and approved by their manager. The amount of time the teleworker is expected to work per day or per pay period will not change due to participation in the teleworking program.

Overtime hours must be pre-approved in writing by the employee's manager. Deviations from the agreed upon schedule must be approved in advance by the manager. Employer policy will be followed for all absences. Non-exempt teleworkers are responsible for keeping and submitting accurate records of their work hours.

Supervisors retain the right to require a teleworker to return to Employer's office on a regularly scheduled teleworking day should work situations warrant such an action. This situation is expected to be only an occasional occurrence. If a teleworker is required to return to Employer's office during regularly scheduled teleworking days frequently, the supervisor may re-evaluate the compatibility of the teleworker's position and job responsibilities with respect to teleworking or the specific teleworking schedule.

Teleworkers are required to account for all time worked in accordance with Employer's current timekeeping policies. It is the teleworker's responsibility to submit an accurate accounting of hours worked in a timely manner. If a teleworker is sick while working at home or uses other time off, the teleworker must report hours actually worked on his/her timesheet and use leave for the remainder of the hours. Nonexempt teleworkers may perform overtime work only after receiving approval from their supervisor.

## **Workspace**

Teleworkers must have an appropriate work area in their home that considers ergonomics, equipment, adequate workspace, noise, and interruption factors. The teleworker's off-site workspace should provide an adequate work area, lighting, telephone service, power and temperature control. Additional requirements may vary, depending on the nature of the work and the equipment needed to perform the work.

Employer's liability for job-related accidents will continue to exist during the approved work schedule and in the teleworker's designated work location since the teleworker's homework space is an extension of Employer workspace. The designated work location must meet OSHA safety rules for the workplace including: smoke detector; working fire extinguisher; clear, unobstructed exits; removal of hazards that could cause falls; adequate electrical circuitry, and appropriate furniture. If an at-home injury occurs, the teleworker must notify his/her supervisor immediately and follow Employer policy for on-the-job injury. The teleworker must agree to follow common safety practices and provide a safe work area for the employee and others who enter it.

Homeowner's insurance and any changes in rates or coverage are the responsibility of the employee. Any increase in the teleworker's home utility costs is the responsibility of the employee.

Federal and state statutory abstracts will be posted at the teleworker's Employer office location in lieu of posting them in the employee's home office. Teleworkers should review these notices while on Employer's premises.

Teleworkers should consult their attorney, tax advisor or accountant regarding any legal or tax implications attendant to working at their home or alternative site.

## **Equipment and Supplies**

In most cases teleworkers will provide their own equipment. Teleworkers may use Employer-owned equipment at their off-site workspace with the prior approval of their supervisor provided that the equipment will be used for Employer work only and its use by a teleworker at his/her off-site workspace will not impede the work of employees working at the Employer office.

Office supplies will be provided by Employer and should be obtained during the teleworker's in-office work period. Out-of-pocket expenses for supplies normally available in the office will not be reimbursed. Teleworkers are responsible for all supplies, equipment, and/or materials provided by Employer. All items remain property of Employer and may not be used for personal use.

Employer will reimburse teleworkers for other business-related expenses, such as long-distance phone calls, shipping costs, etc. that are reasonably incurred in accordance with job responsibilities and approved by the supervisor in accordance with Employer's regular policies. Appropriate documentation is required if such expenses are submitted for reimbursement.

Employer does not assume liability for loss, damage or wear of employee-owned equipment unless otherwise agreed to in writing prior to the occurrence. Maintenance, repair and replacement of Employer-owned equipment issued to teleworkers is the responsibility of Employer. In the event of equipment damage or malfunction, the teleworker must notify his supervisor immediately. Employer reserves the right to enter the home work area for inspection of the equipment, if necessary. Repairs to employee-owned equipment is the responsibility of the teleworker. In either situation, the teleworker may be asked to report to the office until the equipment is usable.

Teleworkers must take appropriate action to protect company-provided equipment from damage or theft. Employer equipment must be returned to Employer when an employee terminates or discontinues the teleworking arrangement.

Teleworkers that use their own equipment (e.g., scanner, printer, phone) provided that no cost is incurred by Employer. Repair and maintenance of employee-owned equipment is the responsibility of the teleworker.

## **Employee Access and Availability**

Teleworkers must be available by telephone or email during scheduled hours, with the exception of their scheduled lunch period. An appropriate level of communication between the telecommuter and supervisor will be agreed to as part of the discussion process and will be more formal during the trial period. After conclusion of the trial period, the manager and telecommuter will communicate at a level consistent with employees working at the office or in a manner and frequency that seems appropriate for the job and the individuals involved.

Teleworkers are required to modify their Employer voicemail announcement to indicate that they may be reached at an alternate number or that they will be regularly checking messages. Supervisors may establish that employees are required to check for messages within a certain period (e.g. at least once every two hours).

Teleworkers must keep their supervisor notified of any changes to their home contact information.

## **Security**

It is the responsibility of the teleworker to take all precautions necessary to secure proprietary information and to prevent unauthorized access. The teleworker is required to observe all office security practices when working outside Employer's office to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of proprietary information. Steps to ensure the protection of proprietary information include, but are not limited to, use of locked file cabinets and desks; regular password maintenance; and any other steps appropriate for the job and the environment.

Teleworkers agree to allow an authorized Employer representative access to the home work area during prearranged times for business purposes as deemed necessary by the supervisor, including safety inspections, equipment installations and repairs, security assurance, retrieval of Employer property, and performance evaluations. To ensure hardware and software security, all software used for teleworking must be approved by the supervisor prior to installation. All software used for teleworking must be virus inspected and each PC must have virus protection software installed.

## **Liability**

It is the responsibility of the teleworker to maintain a safe, professional work site at home that is free from potential safety hazards. Teleworkers must certify that their home is free from workplace hazards by completing a safety checklist.

In the case of an injury while working at home, teleworkers must immediately (or as soon as circumstances permit) report the injury to his/her supervisor or the Human Resources Department and request instructions for obtaining medical treatment.

## **Income Tax**

It will be the teleworker's responsibility to determine any income tax implications of maintaining a home office area. The company will not provide tax guidance nor will the company assume any additional tax liabilities. Employees are encouraged to consult with a qualified tax professional at their own expense to discuss income tax implications.

## **Application Process**

Employees wishing to telework are required to submit a written request. The employee will complete a Teleworker Selection Survey and provide information concerning job responsibilities, proposed teleworking schedule, types of work tasks and activities to be performed at the off-site work space, and description of the off-site work space and the equipment required.

Teleworkers will be required to sign a Teleworking Agreement and complete associated documentation.

Teleworking arrangements will be on a trial basis for the first three months and may be discontinued at any time. If a teleworking arrangement is discontinued by Employer, every effort will be made to provide notice to the employee. However, there may be instances where no notice is possible.

Employees that are teleworking at the time this policy is adopted will be permitted to continue teleworking.

## **Evaluation**

Teleworkers will participate in all studies and reports relating to this program.

Evaluation of telecommuter performance will focus on work output and completion of objectives rather than on time-based performance.

## **Termination**

The availability of telecommuting as a flexible work arrangement for employees of [Company Name] can be discontinued at any time at the discretion of the Employer. Every effort will be made to provide 30 days notice of such a change to accommodate commuting, child care and other problems that may arise from such a change. There may be instances, however, when no notice is possible.