



TELEWORK

MANAGEMENT GUIDE

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Telework has become an increasingly attractive business strategy as employers look for ways to respond to changing business needs and to demonstrate a commitment to employee work-life balance.

The number of teleworkers in the DC Metro region has increased from 27% to 32% in as little as three years, with 887,000 commuters teleworking at least occasionally. In addition, telework helps companies reap benefits such as:

- Reduced real estate costs
- Decreased employee recruitment and training costs
- Improved employee effectiveness and engagement
- Enhanced business continuity capabilities

It is essential that managers effectively identify positions and employee characteristics that are most suitable for teleworking, understand federal employment regulations involved in teleworking and implement a plan to keep teleworkers engaged.

POSITIONS SUITABLE FOR TELEWORK



Many positions are suitable for telework:

- Positions where most work involves electronic transmission of information where there is no risk of breaching client privacy/confidentiality
- Positions that require minimal supervision or have limited face-to-face contact with clients at the employee's worksite



But some may not be suitable:

- Location-specific jobs where duties must be performed onsite, such as a receptionist who needs to be available to greet customers or support the day-to-day needs of office employees
- Trainee or intern positions where onsite materials may be helpful and direct supervision is necessary

CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL TELEWORKER

Employees who work in an eligible position and demonstrate the following qualities typically make the best teleworkers.

General

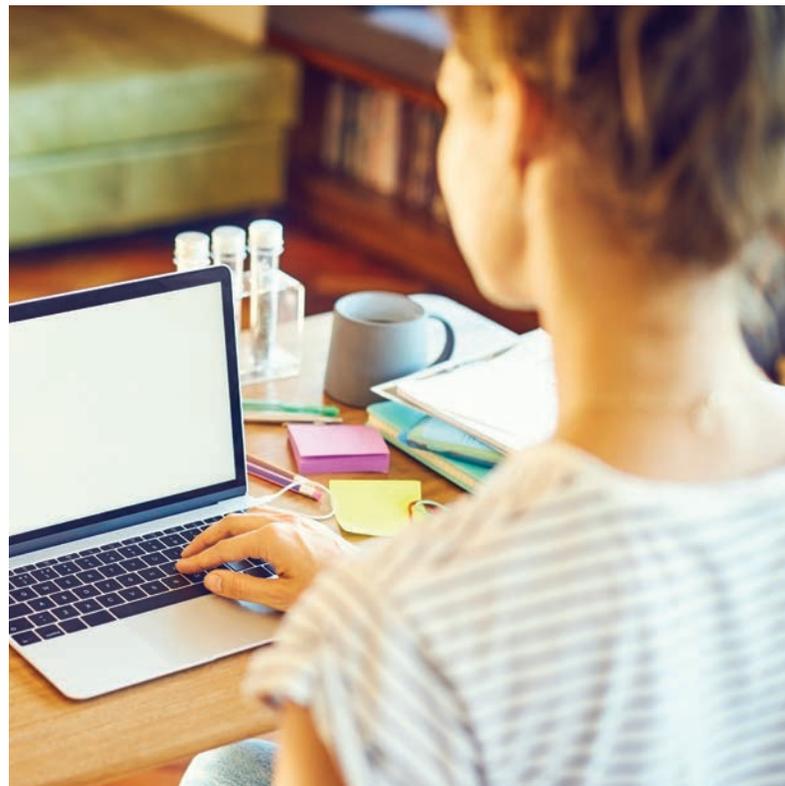
- Strong organizational and time management skills
- Solid written and verbal communication skills
- Self-starter with a good degree of self-discipline
- Able to work with limited supervision
- Able to establish work-life boundaries
- Home environment or remote workspace that is supportive and free from distractions

Performance

- Successful completion of any telework training period
- Strong performance record and knowledge of their position

Technology

- Able to use telework equipment effectively for communication and job duties (phone, email, instant messaging, videoconferencing)
- Resourceful when facing technology issues



CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE MANAGER

Success for a teleworking team starts from the top with an effective manager who understands how best to communicate and engage employees.

Communication

- Clearly identifies and communicates workplans, goals and desired outcomes
- Communicates effectively verbally and in writing
- Addresses issues appropriately and in a timely manner
- Acknowledges and celebrates employee achievements
- Demonstrates flexibility
- Is proactive versus reactive

Performance

- Uses performance metrics, rather than direct oversight, to manage
- Demonstrates comfort with providing feedback on a consistent basis
- Encourages professional development



TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF TELEWORKERS

A successful supervisor will set clear expectations and manage based on an employee's performance. Communication, technology, training and planning can also help managers ensure their workforce is engaged and productive.

Be Prepared

- Familiarize yourself with the company's telework policy
- Understand the selection methods used for determining if an employee is suited for telework, and be able to explain this information to employees
- Test drive telework equipment before "going live"
- Be prepared for IT issues and develop contingency plans
- Develop a telework orientation and training process
- Develop a checklist of supplies provided to teleworkers
- Know federal regulations that interact with telework

Discuss Items with New Teleworkers

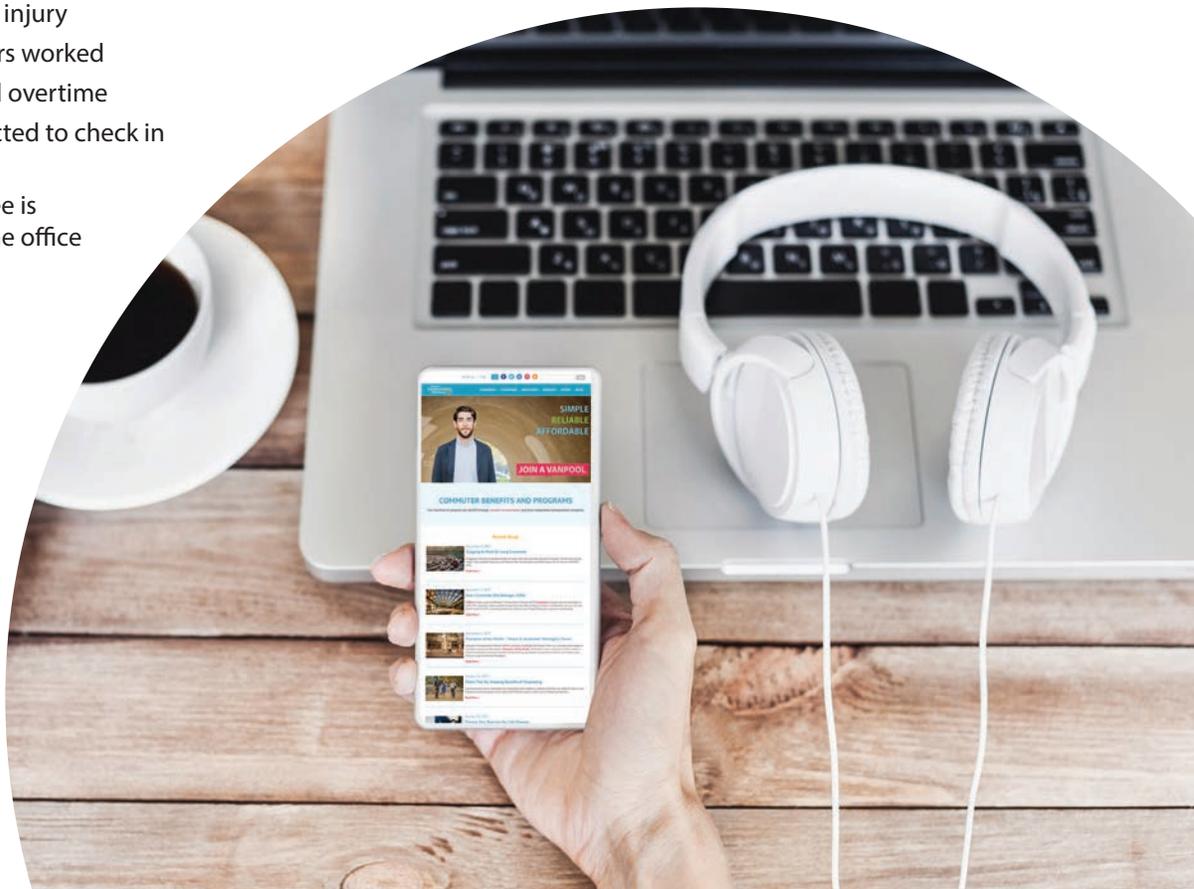
- The company's telework policy and telework agreement
- Rules of use of company telework equipment
- How to handle routine maintenance or troubleshooting of equipment
- Preferred contact method
- Rules for notifying manager or IT regarding equipment issues or damage
- Rules for reporting personal injury
- Expectations regarding hours worked
- How to handle unscheduled overtime
- How often telework is expected to check in with the office
- If/when/how often employee is expected to be present in the office

Keep Teleworkers Engaged

- Recognize that characteristics of an effective teleworker (self-motivated, works well alone) can also subject the employee to feeling isolated
- Assign a more experienced teleworker to serve as the employee's mentor to create a support system
- Include teleworkers in team meetings and in office celebrations by coordinating for them to be onsite or through technology
- Recognize that teleworkers may not get the same information onsite employees do and check in often
- Establish a schedule for face-to-face contact, but be flexible

Stay Connected with Technology

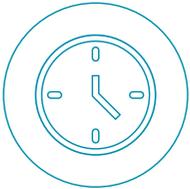
- Videoconference tools (Zoom, GoToMeeting, Skype)
- Company intranet
- Instant messaging (Skype, Hangouts, Spark, Jabber)
- Phone calls



FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT LAWS TO KNOW

QUICK GUIDE

- Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)
- Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)
- Workers' Compensation (WC)
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)



Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

The FLSA establishes overtime rules and recordkeeping standards regarding hours worked.

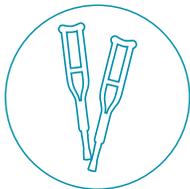
- The term "hours worked" includes all time during which an employee is required or allowed to perform work for the employer, regardless of where the work is done
- There are a few challenges that can arise for managers of teleworkers, including:
 - o Reporting and monitoring of hours
 - √ Require sign in using a timesheet or electronic timekeeping service
 - o Working off the clock
 - √ Communicate that teleworkers who do not record their time worked accurately risk having telework privileges revoked
 - o Pre-approval of overtime
 - √ Communicate any company policies regarding pre-approval of overtime



Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)

OSHA requires employers to provide workplaces free from known hazards and record workplace injuries.

- OSHA requires that workplace injuries, including those that happen at a home office be recorded by the employer
- OSHA does not require inspections of teleworkers' homes
 - o OSHA will not conduct inspections of home offices nor hold employers liable for their employees' home offices
 - o If OSHA were to receive a complaint about a home office, the complainant will be advised of this policy



Worker's Compensation (WC)

Worker's Compensation provides compensation to employees who develop an injury or illness during employment.

- Determining whether a teleworker's injury/illness is covered under WC is challenging because it must be determined if the injury was a result of a home office workplace or a residential situation
- Injuries or illness that an employee may consider work-related (including slips or falls) should be reported to the supervisor immediately, regardless of the location where it occurred
- Managers should report these injuries to HR as quickly as possible, within 24 hours
- It is not the manager's or HR's role to determine if the injury is work-related. This decision is made by the WC carrier



Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA requires employers with 15 or more employees to provide reasonable accommodation for employees with disabilities.

- While telework may be considered a reasonable accommodation in some situations, employers are not required to provide telework as an accommodation
 - Employer may consider regular job duties, employee eligibility and available technology when determining if telework is a suitable reasonable accommodation for the situation



Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

The FMLA provides job-protected leave to eligible employees of qualified employers who are absent due to incapacitation caused by a serious health condition or to care for a qualifying family member with a serious health condition.

- Telework is not an option when employees are incapacitated with a serious health condition and are on an approved FMLA leave as indicated by their physician





DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Q Dora has worked for ABC Company for eight months and has been on a performance improvement plan for two months due to tardiness issues. She is requesting to start teleworking so that she can avoid traffic issues which would solve her tardiness. Would you approve or deny her request to telework?

Answer

Dora's request for telework could be denied due to her current performance record.

Q Martha is a regular teleworker who is on an approved FMLA leave for her condition. According to the medical certification, she is incapacitated due to a recent knee replacement surgery and her doctor expects her leave to last through December 1. On November 20, you receive an email from Martha that indicates she is teleworking. Is this permitted under the FMLA?

Answer

No. If Martha believes she is fit to return to work, she must have the health care provider who initially completed the medical certification update the form accordingly.

Q During a conference call while working from his home office, Joe had gotten up to run to the kitchen and slid on a banana peel which caused him to fall and land on his back. Is this injury covered by workers' compensation?

Answer

It is not your job to determine this and it should be reported to HR immediately so that a decision can be made by the WC carrier.

Q Rob is a new employee with XYZ Company in Arlington, but he'll be working remotely for the first time ever as he lives in New York. What are some things you can do to make sure he still feels like part of the team through his first weeks at work?

Answer

The possibilities are endless, but a few ideas include:

- **Videoconference with the team on Rob's first day**
- **Assign a mentor for Rob**
- **Develop a communication plan for Rob so he knows how often and which methods are best for check in**

EMPLOYEE TELEWORK ELIGIBILITY

General Information

Employee Name: _____ Supervisor: _____

Position Title: _____ Hire Date: ____/____/____

Is the employee serving in a probationary or training period? Y ____ N ____

Position Eligibility Criteria

Does the position require:	Yes	No
The employee to report daily to the worksite?		
Continuous on-the-job training or close supervision at the worksite?		
Daily access to or use of equipment, facilities or materials that the organization cannot provide to the employee or that is not available at the alternative worksite?		
Daily face-to-face contact with supervisors, colleagues, customers and/or the public at the worksite that cannot be otherwise achieved?		
Daily access to classified materials or networks?		
Daily access to systems, networks and/or applications that cannot otherwise be accessed outside of the traditional worksite?		
A level of service to customers that could not be maintained at an alternative worksite?		

If the answer to one or more of these questions is **Yes**, the employee may not be eligible to telework.

Employee Performance Criteria

Does the employee:	Yes	No
Currently have a performance rating that is less than satisfactory?		
Have documented deficiencies that would cause overall performance level to fall below satisfactory since last review?		
Have a record of formal disciplinary action within the past 12 months?		
Have a record of verbal conversation or written reprimand due to behavioral or ethical concerns within the past 12 months?		
Have a documented record of disciplinary action for being absent without approval on multiple instances in any calendar year?		

If the answer to one or more of these questions is **Yes**, the employee may not be eligible to telework.

Position Eligibility Criteria

Does the employee:	Yes	No
Demonstrate strong organizational skills?		
Possess excellent time management skills?		
Have the ability to work independently with minimal supervision?		
Have sufficient skill in using technologies required for telework?		
Exhibit strong written and verbal communication skills?		
Have a supportive home environment free from distractions?		
Demonstrate self-discipline and self-motivation?		
Possess the ability to solve problems independently?		
Demonstrate reliability in job duties and concerning work hours?		

If the answer to these questions is **Yes**, the employee is more likely to be suitable for telework.

Determination

Position is eligible for regular/recurring telework on a *full-time* basis (every day) Y____ N____

Position is eligible for regular/recurring telework on a *limited* basis (set schedule) Y____ N____

Position is eligible for situational/ad hoc telework Y____ N____

Employee is eligible for telework Y____ N____

Provide justification for the determination

Reason Not Eligible for Telework	√
Position requires employee's presence at worksite to perform job duties.	
Position requires daily face-to-face contact at worksite with supervisor, colleagues, customers and/or the public.	
Position requires access to material, facilities or equipment not otherwise available.	
Position requires daily access to classified material.	
Employee's job duty performance or conduct is of concern.	
Employee is serving in a probationary period.	

Additional information regarding justification for employee/position telework ineligibility:

TELEWORK MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

General Information

Employee Name: _____

FLSA Exempt? Y _____ N _____

Position Title: _____

Hire Date: ____/____/____

Manager's Checklist

These are items that should be planned and discussed with a teleworking employee for effective management.

General

- I have determined the employee is eligible and suitable for telework via the Employee Telework Eligibility Worksheet
- I have communicated our telework policy with the employee
- I have read over the telework agreement with the employee and received a signed copy

Technology

- I have ensured we have the appropriate telework supplies for the teleworker and that it is in proper condition
- I have a list of the supplies that was provided to the employee
- I have discussed rules of use of company equipment for telework with the employee
- I have discussed how to handle technology issues with the employee and a contingency plan is in place if/when issues occur

Management

- I have identified the performance metrics for this position
- The employee has been informed of my expectations for this role verbally and in writing

Employee Engagement

- I have discussed expectations around how often the employee and I will check in with each other
- I have communicated my preferred contact method with the employee
- The employee and I know which tools we will use to stay in contact (Zoom, Skype, etc)
- I have identified a mentor for the employee to create a support system
- The employee and I have discussed if/when/how often the employee will be onsite
- I have a long term plan in place to support employee engagement and an inclusive work environment

Schedule or Core Hours

Days/hours employee is expected to work

Day of Week	Schedule/Core Hours	Onsite or Telework
Sunday		
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		

