

Telework Program Handbook

Introduction

This telework program handbook is a reference to provide guiding principles for the implementation of telework at WSDOT and to help employees and supervisors understand how to make telework a routine part of doing business.

It is the policy of the agency that teleworking is a business practice that provides benefits to WSDOT, its employees, the economy and the environment. A well-structured telework program can enhance productivity, job satisfaction and morale. Telework is a component of the Governor's "Building a Modern Work Environment" [Executive Order 16-07](#) and WSDOT's Modern Work Environment [Secretary's Executive Order 1099.00](#). A mobile workforce provides staff flexibility in how, when, and where work gets done so employees can have work/life balance, improved wellness, increased job satisfaction and engagement. A mobile workforce that uses a teleworking component also complements the goals of the WSDOT's Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) [Secretary's Executive Order 1086.01](#)

Telework is an effective business practice that can have a positive impact on our organization. WSDOT is using telework to create a more efficient and satisfied workforce. The use of best practices and continuous improvement will assist in inserting telework into our culture.

Definitions

Telework – is a formal work arrangement that allows an employee to perform work, during their approved work schedule, at a location different from their official duty station by using technology that allows access to normal work material (e.g. email, telephone, electronic documents).

Official Duty Station - The city, town, or other location where the employee's office is located or where the employee is assigned to work on a permanent basis when not teleworking.

WSDOT recognizes multiple telework arrangements as defined below:

Regular Telework - An employee works from home or other (alternate) location a minimum of two days every month. An approved telework agreement and safety checklist forms are on file with the local HR Consultant. This telework arrangement counts toward the state and agency telework goals as documented in the above-mentioned Modern Work Environment Executive Orders.

Occasional Telework – An employee works from home or other (alternate) location as needed less than two days per month. Periods of occasional telework are short-term and/or for specific reasons (including inclement weather or during emergency events). Occasional telework must be approved by the employee's supervisor on a case-by-case basis and requires an approved telework agreement to be on file with the local HR Consultant.

Reasonable Accommodation – A telework arrangement may also be approved as a form of reasonable accommodation. The local Human Resources (HR) Office facilitates the reasonable accommodation process.

Infant at Work Program and Telework – Employees participating in the Infant at Work Program may have the option to telework. Refer to the Infant at Work Policy (Chapter 31 of the Human Resource Desk Manual) and local HR Consultant regarding the Infant at Work Program telework option.

Position Suitability

A suitable position has duties that can be performed remotely without impacting service quality or organizational operations. The suitability of a position can change. Some positions may not be suitable for telework due to the nature of the duties or some may be seasonally suitable based on their specific location or duties.

Managers/supervisors determine suitability of each position based on the responsibilities associated with the position. A position may be found eligible for telework within a job classification that is typically telework ineligible if that position has unique job duties that make it suitable for telework.

Criteria for a position to be suitable for telework may include:

- The position allows flexibility regarding face-to-face interaction and coordination of work with other employees, outside colleagues, stakeholders, and/or the public
- Some or all of the work activities may be performed effectively while working away from the official duty station without impacting service quality or organizational operations.
- Work performance can be evaluated using methods other than in-person observation of time spent doing the job.
- The position does not require immediate access to equipment, documents or other information located only at the official duty station.

Employee Eligibility

The supervisor will determine if an employee is eligible for telework. When determining eligibility the supervisor will consider agency business needs, employee performance, and the characteristics of a good teleworker as outlined in the [“How to Determine Telework Suitability”](#). Employee telework approval is based on job functions and work performance characteristics.

An employee may be eligible to telework, provided the following key principles are met:

- Absence from the official worksite is not a detriment to work group productivity or a negative impact on other employees’ working conditions.
- The job or tasks can be readily completed at a telework location.
- The employee is accessible to their supervisor.
- The employee and supervisor are willing to communicate regularly to meet all business needs.
- Telework is operationally feasible.
- The employee is meeting expectations.
- There is no loss of production or performance.
- It is voluntary.

- It does not change the terms and conditions of employment nor the provisions of collective bargaining agreement.
- The employee and supervisor sign and abide by a telework agreement. In some divisions, final approval authority rests with the appointing authority or manager with delegated appointed authority.

Employees should consider the following factors in making an honest determination about their telework capabilities:

- Sufficient portable work for the amount of telework being proposed.
- Discipline and motivation to work independently, without close supervision.
- Comfort with the technologies needed to telework.
- Good communication with management, co-workers, and customers that will enable a seamless transition from on-site to off-site.
- Telework work space is conducive to getting the work done.
- Individual social and professional needs.
- Dependent care (e.g. childcare outside of the Infant at Work Program, elder care, or care of any other dependent adults) arrangements in place during work hours.
- Ability to be flexible about the telework arrangement to respond to the needs of the supervisor, the workgroup, and the workload.

Telework is not a fit for everyone. Employees must consider the adjustments that will take place in social interactions, communication with supervisor and work team, personal development, and motivation in their decision to telework. An employee may want to consider:

- Possible feelings of isolation.
- The effort needed to maintain communications and good working relations with colleagues.
- They may not be available for coworkers when needed.
- Distractions at their telework location.

Telework Agreement

When a telework agreement is approved by the supervisor, the supervisor submits the signed agreement and safety checklist to the local HR Consultant. After submission, the employee may begin teleworking. The agreement remains in effect until changed or terminated by supervisor or employee in writing. The examples below are considered a change to the agreement:

- Frequency (increase or decrease).
- Change of alternate work site.

Cancellation, Denial, and Appeal of Telework Agreement

Telework is not an employee entitlement, even if the employee's position is considered suitable for telework. Telework requests may be not approved and existing telework agreements may be withdrawn by the employee or supervisor at any time.

If a supervisor has determines that an agreement should be canceled, or an employee chooses to withdraw from the program, the supervisor or employee will complete and both supervisor and employee will sign the Telework Denial/Cancellation Form (310-053). The completed form is forwarded to the local HR Consultant.

Reasons for canceling a telework agreement include:

- Employee chooses to withdraw from teleworking.
- Changes to the business needs require the employee's presence in the office.
- Change in job responsibilities.
- Employee work performance does not meet the stated expectations and standards.
- Violation of a provision in the telework agreement, the telework handbook or Chapter 30.

If an employee is denied a request or the ability to continue to telework, the denial and reason(s) must be documented on the [Denial/Cancellation Form](#) (310-053). The employee may file a written appeal within fifteen (15) days. The appeal will go to the Appointing Authority or designee for final determination.

Commute Trip Reduction (CTR)

Teleworking is a form of CTR participation as a commute option but teleworking does not qualify for a CTR incentive or subsidy. If you are traveling to an alternate worksite and your commute mode is in a non-SOV (Single Occupancy Vehicle) you may be eligible for an [incentive or subsidy](#).

Alternate work site

Employees may be eligible to telework from an alternate WSDOT or other state agency office that is more convenient to their home based on the distance or availability of public transportation. Employees and supervisors will coordinate scheduling, access, space, supplies, and equipment needs with the alternate site manager. Depending on the frequency of telework, the employee may not need an assigned space and may be able to utilize a "landing zone" or other space configuration. Telework employees will not meet with the public/clients in an official capacity from their home. Telework employees may meet with the public/clients in an official capacity if the approved alternate location is another state office.

If the employee is not able to work their scheduled work hours, the employee must:

- submit leave in accordance with WAC 357-28, the collective bargaining agreement, and the agency's time tracking policies and procedures, or
- Report to their official duty station, or
- Report to an alternate location where work can be accomplished.

Travel time to an alternate work location or official duty station is not considered part of the workday unless the employee has prior supervisor approval (see Telework during daily commute section)

Daily Commute

Without prior supervisor approval, an employee cannot count travel to their official duty station or alternate work location as work time if the employee knows prior to the telework day that attendance is required at either location. If a meeting request is made during the telework day, travel to the official duty station is considered work time. The return trip is considered after hours commute time.

Telework during Daily Commute

With prior supervisor approval, overtime eligible employees may include work completed during their commute as part of their approved work schedule. This applies when employees can work safely and effectively while commuting as a passenger in a non-drive-alone vehicle.

Mileage Reimbursement

Traveling between your alternate work location and office duty station is not considered travel status and is not reimbursable. Please see the Statewide Administrative and Accounting Manual (SAAM) sections 10.50.20 and 10.50.25 for details on mileage that can be reimbursed.

Equipment, Tools, and Technology

WSDOT provides and supports one computer and monitor per employee. WSDOT will not provide additional computers or monitors for telework. The employee assumes all of the costs for teleworking including maintenance of personal equipment, virus protection software (for using a personal computer, high-speed Internet, and incidental residential utility costs. If Information Technology (IT) needs cannot be met, telework may not be approved.

- WSDOT-provided items remain the property of WSDOT and must be returned to WSDOT upon request.
- The employee may choose to use personal equipment for teleworking purposes. In the case of personal equipment, the employee will be responsible for the maintenance, repair and insurance required for the equipment.
- Work performed while teleworking remains subject to WSDOT and other applicable regulations including the Washington State Public Records Act.
- WSDOT email is only used for work activities and communications.
- ITD support staff will provide only basic connectivity support (i.e. VPN and Citrix), and will not repair or troubleshoot non-WSDOT equipment or connectivity issues.

The teleworking employee agrees:

- To safeguard WSDOT property and are responsible for the care, security and effective utilization of WSDOT property.
- To not install WSDOT-owned software on personal equipment.
- To not duplicate WSDOT-owned software.
- WSDOT-provided computer and software are for use on work assignments only. Other household members or anyone else must not use WSDOT-owned equipment.
- To provide their own printers, monitors, or other peripherals.
- Provide a “consistent” high-speed Internet connection such as cable or other broadband connection.

Computer set up

WSDOT ITD Support Staff will not provide equipment installation outside a WSDOT worksite. Teleworkers will be provided with installation instructions and all required software will be installed at a WSDOT worksite (or by remote control) by ITD Support Staff. Teleworkers will be expected to plug in cables, add paper and ink/toner and perform basic user maintenance. [A Remote Access Tools User Guide](#) is available to assist employees with computer set up. If an employee experiences computer problems, contact the ITD Service Desk at 360-705-7050 for technical assistance. If additional maintenance or repair is required for WSDOT equipment, the teleworker is required to bring the WSDOT – provided equipment to an agency worksite. If the problem cannot be solved in a reasonable time, the teleworker must inform their supervisor. If the remaining daily tasks are computer-dependent, the employee may need to report to their duty station for the remainder of the day. Travel to the duty station is not considered work time. Leave may also be used if the computer problems cannot be resolved in a reasonable period of time.

The ITD Support Staff is responsible in assisting with WSDOT owned tools and equipment. They do not have authorization to work on personal equipment owned by employees. [SEO E 1021.02](#) – Employee Use of Electronic Communication Systems establishes both permissible and prohibited use of state-owned electronic communication systems.

Internet connection

There are variety of remote access tools for connecting to the WSDOT network to gain access to shared drives and computer programs used in the execution of job duties. Telework employees should discuss their computer program needs with their respective supervisor and IT staff to ensure the best method of remote connectivity is chosen to meet the telework employees' needs.

Options for connecting to the network:

- Outlook webmail when you want to check email from any computer with internet access: <https://remotemail.wsdot.wa.gov>
- With a safe word token, Citrix provides online access to WSDOT applications from any computer. <https://remoteoffice.wsdot.wa.gov>
- Virtual Private Network (VPN) allows access to the network from a **WSDOT computer with** VPN software and high-speed Internet connection. This remote access option is required to use a WSDOT computer . Find more guidance on the intranet at: <http://wwi.wsdot.wa.gov/IT/Remote+Access+Options.htm>

Transporting a WSDOT device

Transport the device in a carrying case and secure it in the trunk of a car. Employees should always make the assumption that there is confidential information stored on WSDOT owned equipment. This link offers more information on security: [WAC 292-110-010, Use of State Resources](#)

Forwarding office phone to telework phone

The office phone can be forwarded to another telephone if both places are in the same local dialing area. Both of these steps must be done from your WSDOT office phone.

To **forward** an office telephone to another telephone, dial *02 9 and the local number (example: *02 9 (area code) xxx-xxxx). You will hear a three-beep confirmation tone letting you know it was accepted.

To **un-forward** at your WSDOT office, dial #02. You will hear a three beep confirmation tone letting you know that your telephone has been un-forwarded. You cannot un-forward your telephone from a remote location. T

This process may differ in the various regions. Please ask your Telecommunications expert in your region. Telework employees may request a CenturyLink World Card to be used for long distance calling.

Ethics

Employees will individually and collectively maintain the highest standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality, and conduct in the performance of official duties. Employees are directed to follow

the provisions of the Ethics Law, the rulings of the Executive Ethics Board, and department policies. For further information, refer to [Secretary's Executive Order E 1004.03](#)

Information Security

Employees must protect the security and integrity of data, information, paper files, and access to agency computer systems. WSDOT confidentiality and security standards apply to mobile work just as they would at the official duty station. Each employee must follow the rules and procedures for IT security published in the IT Manual [M3017.00](#) and Policy Statement [P 2017.01](#).

The employee must receive prior employer approval to remove secure/confidential materials from the official workstation, or to electronically access secure/confidential information remotely. The employee will take reasonable precautions to secure confidential materials at all times such that materials are in the employee's possession or control. Do not save confidential information on personal devices regardless of location. The employee agrees to abide by all data security procedures, as described in [WSDOT Administrative Policies](#) and the [IT Security Manual](#). Using a remote access tool such as Citrix will eliminate any need to save any work related information on personal equipment. See [Remote Access User Guide](#).

If work-related files are saved on a personal home machine or cell phone, and/or personal email is used for work-related communications, the employee's personal equipment may be reviewed in a public records request.

Safety and Liability

Teleworkers are responsible to ensure their alternate work location is safe and free from hazards. The location should meet the same health and safety standards as their official duty station. The designated home workspace is an extension of the agency workspace only when used for work. An employee may be covered for workers' compensation if injured while performing work on behalf of the agency. If an injury occurs during work hours, report the injury by going to the [Safety and Health Services intranet page](#), opening the [SIIRS homepage](#), and fill out an incident reporting help ticket. Employees may not conduct in-person meetings, or host clients or customers at their home office. The State of Washington is not responsible for any injuries to family members, visitors, and others in an alternate workspace.

The Department of Labor and Industries' website offers an online courses and videos on office safety and health. To access this information go to <http://lni.wa.gov/Safety/TrainingPrevention/Materials/default.asp>

Approved telework employees are covered by workers' compensation for job-related injuries that occur in the course and scope of employment. When the telework site is in the home, workers' compensation does not cover injuries that are not job related.

Office Coverage

Telework employees should help manage the group's expectations and their own communication in order to avoid any negative impact from their arrangement. Issues that should be addressed include the following:

- Arrange back-up. Even with very portable work, instances where physical presence is

required and a co-worker may need to step in occur. Co-worker backup should be planned, it should not be burdensome, and it should be reciprocal.

- Avoid missing meetings at the office. Schedule your teleworking days around office meetings or participate in the meetings via conference call or Skype.

Ergonomics

A good set up for an employee's device can make a big difference in their comfort and productivity. Ergonomics training and education are issues addressed by the WSDOT [Ergonomics Program](#) found on the [Safety and Health Services intranet page](#). The site has presentations and materials categorized by the type of work you perform. The site also provides links containing additional information about Ergonomics.

The Department of Labor and Industries has an interactive video for adjusting a computer workstation and mobile computing. The informational video is found [here](#).

Telework Best Practices

Telework, like other employment flexibilities, can assist supervisors in attracting, recruiting, and retaining the best possible workforce. Telework can help employees and supervisors work more effectively in their positions, by decreasing employee commute times, other work/life stressors, and improving organizational communications. For telework to be a successful tool, supervisors must be committed to using telework to the fullest extent possible. Managerial skill, participation, and support can make telework an asset to our organization.

Employee Recommendations

Keeping connected to the office

Good communication is vital to effective teleworking. Telework employees must be available during scheduled work hours, as defined by their work schedule and approved by their supervisor.

Contact information should be included in the Outlook calendar so supervisors, co-workers and customers can easily contact the employee. Other options available to employees and supervisors may include:

- A daily telework report.
- Tracking work tasks, breaks, and lunch on Outlook.
- Forwarding voicemails to telephone or email.
- Noting "teleworking" on office in/out board.
- Updating voicemail.
- Posting a sign at the employee's workstation providing contact information to coworkers and customers.

Planning

Employees should assess the portability of their work and the level of availability of any technology needed at the remote site as they prepare to telework. You will need to anticipate the files, documents, and equipment you will need and who needs to be notified prior to teleworking. To get the most benefit from teleworking employees may want to also consider these strategies:

- Continue the ritual of getting ready for the office.

- Consider the files or other documents you will need to take or make available prior to your telework day.
- Set a work schedule for the day you telework and stick to it as much as possible.
- Set aside time for breaks- stretch, take a walk, or practice stress reduction techniques.
- Pace yourself and do not burn out.
- Have an end-of-the-day ritual. It is wise to have some ritual that marks the end of the workday

A self-assessment tool helps an employee interested in teleworking decide whether telework is right for them. A [telework self-assessment](#) tool is found on the telework intranet page.

Manager/Supervisor Recommendations

Telework, like other employment flexibilities, can assist supervisors in attracting, recruiting, and retaining the best possible workforce. In addition, by decreasing employee commute times, other work/life stressors, and improving organization communications, telework can help employees and supervisors work more effectively in their positions.

Management buy-in and commitment are important prerequisites for the success of any telework program. Many of the same attributes for successful telework employees also apply to successful telework supervisors. Some supervisors of telework employees will have to modify their work habits to become successful in supporting the telework program.

Communication

Teleworking and non-teleworking employees must understand expectations regarding telework agreements, including coverage, communication, and responsibilities. Supervisors must also facilitate communication within the work group. Effective communication is key with all employees. Make sure your employee knows the best way to communicate with you, coworkers, and customers while teleworking. Although individual telework employees must take responsibility for their own availability and information sharing, supervisors should ensure methods are in place to maintain open communication across all members of a workgroup. Supervisors should make an effort to assist teleworkers in staying connected to the office. Telework employees can request a CenturyLink World Card to be used for long distance calling.

When possible:

- Ensure teleworkers receive all office communications in a timely manner
- Schedule meetings on days the teleworkers are in the office or set up meetings to include audio-conference, video-conference or other electronic means
- Consider having an office discussion on ways to maintain communications and teamwork
- Ensure teleworkers remain aware of and involved in official events, decision-making, discussions and planning.

Being an effective telework supervisor:

- Avoid distributing work based on “availability” as measured by physical presence.
- Maintain a flexible approach to program parameters.
- Discuss the job requirements with the employee and determine their equipment needs, the challenge will be finding the right balance of budget and effectiveness.

Set expectations

The telework agreement provides a framework for the discussion that needs to take place between the supervisor and the employee about expectations. For routine, casual, and emergency telework, this discussion is imperative to ensure the supervisor and the employee understand each other's expectations about basic issues, such as:

- Will the employee be required to work core hours? Is there flexibility?
- What are the expectations for availability (by phone, email, etc.)?
- How will contact be maintained and at what frequency?
- What equipment is the agency providing?
- What records and associated information will the telework employee need access to and how will they be accessed?
- What are the information handling expectation of the employee?
- What will the daily/weekly/monthly telework schedule be?

Performance standards for telework employees are the same as performance standards for on-site employees.

Maintain a flexible approach

Most teleworkers and supervisors will need to do some fine-tuning once the agreement is implemented. For example, it maybe that the selected day of the week for teleworking isn't a good fit for the supervisor based on office coverage or some teleworkers may find that they would prefer more or less time at the remote location. You should maintain a flexible approach to program parameters especially at the beginning when there are likely to be more adjustment needs.

Training

Specific management practices such as the ability to manage by results and skill in setting and communicating clear goals is essential. LMS offers a Mobile Work for Supervisors training course. The course is designed to help supervisors and managers understand strategies and benefits of a modern workplace environment. The course focuses on staff suitability to participate in mobile work, how to manage mobile workers, and information on expectations for alternate work locations. Contact your local HR consultant for more information about the course.