



EMPLOYEE TELEWORK PROGRAM

Employee Telework Handbook A Roadmap for Telework

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V6.0

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Forward

Traditionally, telework has fallen under the umbrella of transportation demand management (TDM) strategies because it is seen as an alternative to commuting. In fact, telework intersects innovative strategies in numerous domains: transportation, environment, land use & planning, broadband infrastructure, technology, education, commerce, and economic development. It's remarkable. The idea of working at an alternate site is nothing new, but during the past few years teleworking has been unveiled as a realistic solution to some very serious problems. Telework is a tool for a more efficient and effective workforce and a strategy to reduce expenditures for energy, equipment and office leases. Telework is part of the mix of commute alternatives that has real potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, employees benefit from reduced stress, increase job satisfaction, and a better work-home balance. Telework as a management option can improve the agency's ability to recruit and retain a high quality workforce, increase productivity, increase office morale and save money by reducing real estate.

Today it's often easier to bring the work to the worker than vice versa. Technology has evolved so far and so fast in the past few years that access to home computing and communications is both affordable and efficient. Workers can do virtually anything at an alternate site that can be done in the official workstation with the right tools. Millions of Americans already work at alternate sites, at least part of the time in the private sector, federal government, and state and local government.

This document is intended as a reference to provide guiding principles for the implementation of telework in WSDOT and to help supervisors and employees understand how to make telework a routine part of doing business, as well as how to integrate telework into emergency planning. This document is not a substitute for existing WSDOT telework policies.

Implicit in this manual is the expectation that it takes two to telework: the supervisor and the employee. The telework program is a way to help you work better and smarter. If you find that teleworking is not for you, no problem, teleworking is voluntary. However, if you find that teleworking helps you to maintain or increase your level of job performance, great!

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CHAPTER 1

What Is Telework?

Telework is an authorized working agreement for eligible employees to perform all or part of their regular work away from their official duty station. WSDOT defines telework as working from *“home or another acceptable location that is not the official duty station for one or more days per week, month or selected time period.”*

Working from an acceptable location during those rare occasions when it is difficult or dangerous to commute (severe weather events, pandemic, etc.) ensures continuity of operations. It is an efficient option for workers in eligible positions. Employees, with management approval, will need an agreement on file to use this option.

Telework can also be used as a form of reasonable accommodation. Reasonable accommodation is determined through the Human Resources (HR) Office. Please contact your local HR Consultant if you have questions regarding reasonable accommodation.

Telework is not an employee right. Telework is a management option that benefits the agency, employees and communities throughout Washington State.

Why telework?

Numerous benefits can be realized from teleworking when it is integrated into an organization’s culture, operating philosophy and processes.

Everyone benefits

<i>Employer</i>	<i>Employee</i>	<i>Community</i>
Increased Productivity	Improved Work Environment with Fewer Distractions	Decreased Air Pollution
Competitive Recruitment Advantage	Increased Job Satisfaction	Decreased Gas Consumption
Employee Retention	Decreased Stress	Decreased Rush Hour Traffic
Improved Employee Morale	Increased Flexibility	Less Dependence on Foreign Oil
Decreased Staff Turnover	Decreased Costs Associated with Work and Travel	Increased Potential for Economic Development
Promotes Compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	Increased Safety in Home and Community	
Continuity of Operations		

Telework is an effective business practice that can have a positive impact on organizations. 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 the culture. WSDOT has an opportunity to be a leader among state agencies as it embraces this opportunity to benefit the economy, support the environment, and enhance our communities.

Can anyone telework?

Teleworking is not for all positions or employees. In general, some job classifications within the agency have been determined eligible for telework consideration based on typical work descriptions. Managers will determine which positions are eligible within his/her units. An *eligible position* is defined as a position that can be performed remotely without impacting service quality or organizational operations. The eligibility of a position may change depending on circumstances.

Employees who apply to telework will be approved on the basis of job functions and work performance characteristics. An *eligible employee* is defined as an employee, in an eligible position, who has been identified by the employee's supervisor as satisfactorily meeting performance standards, terms, and conditions of employment of his/her position. The employee shall have no active formal corrective and/or disciplinary actions on file for the current or immediately preceding appraisal period.

Telework is not a right fit for every eligible employee. Teleworking involves hard work, dedication and adjustment. For teleworking to be possible, some amount of work must be done at the alternate site without feedback or approval. In many cases, the employee will benefit from spending time alone. However, if an employee plans to work at home over 50 percent of the time,

he or she should be confident about making independent decisions.

There are many advantages to teleworking; however, there can also be disadvantages. Some telework employees may have to adjust to being isolated from coworkers. Isolation is a big adjustment telework employees have to make. Eventually people must compensate for social breaks at the coffeepot by keeping in contact in other ways (phone, email, etc.), or by catching up when in the office. However, some people may dismiss the possibility of teleworking right away, knowing that they need social contact on a frequent basis in order to work productively. Each person has his or her individual social and professional needs. Telework as an effective work option should improve professional and personal development.

If a high amount of concentration is required on the job, then teleworking could increase or decrease productivity, depending on the situation at the alternate site and in the office. If space is limited and employees are sharing an office, working at home may decrease interruptions for employees on and off-site.

Employees who have been on the job a long time are usually more familiar with their tasks, as well as their coworkers. Coworkers who are unfamiliar with the telework employee may be less likely to call when assistance or input is needed from the telework employee.

Teleworking is not absence from the work team. Successful telework employees develop communication plans that encourage participation in the team environment whether working from an alternate site or in the office.

Experience has shown that while most telework employees require a period of adjustment, those employees who are self-motivated and wish to have the flexibility that telework provides tend to experience few difficulties. Any 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 site.
- The employee is accessible to their supervisor.
- The supervisor is satisfied with the employee's performance.
- 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.
- The employee and supervisor are willing to communicate regularly to meet all business needs.
- Telework is operationally feasible.
- There is no loss of production or performance.
- It is voluntary.
- It generates no extra costs (except for one-time start-up costs) that cannot be recouped over a reasonable period of time.
- It does not change the terms and conditions of employment nor the provisions of collective bargaining agreement.

What types of positions are adaptable to telework?

Some examples are: auditors, computer systems administrators, researchers, planners, engineers, designers, management and program analysts, fiscal analyst, personnel specialists, and technical writers. Each case must be judged individually. The final eligibility determination will rest with the delegated appointing authority.

Certain responsibilities make some positions more adaptable to telework. For example, project-oriented tasks such as reading proposals and reviews, conducting research, preparing budgets, design work, drafting, graphics, work planning, editing, analysis, web training and programming/monitoring contracts. Easily quantifiable tasks such as data and word processing, and time on the telephone are good tasks for remote work too. Some positions, such as bridge inspectors, remedial crews, heavy machinery operators and ferry boat captains may not be suitable for telework due to the nature of the duties being primary in the field. Some positions maybe seasonally eligible based on the location and nature of the tasks.

Can a supervisor telework?

The telework option is intended for all employees in eligible positions. Provided the basic principles are met, any employee may be eligible for teleworking.

How do I get started?

The opportunity to work at an alternate site is a management option. Teleworking is not a universal employee right. The employee option to telework is voluntary and typically initiated by the interested employee in an eligible position. Supervisors may then

approve those candidates who meet the required criteria. However, in some divisions, if the director chooses so, the final authority rests with the manager having delegated approval authority of your organization.

Potential telework employees should conduct a self-assessment to evaluate their organization and time management skills. A best practice is to complete a self-assessment document before requesting a telework arrangement. A self-assessment tool helps the employee interested in teleworking decide whether telework is right for him or her. A copy of the [self-assessment tool](#) is provided on the intranet.

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, if any, needed to telework
- Good communication with management, co-workers, and customers that will enable a seamless transition from on-site to off-site
- Telework office space conducive to getting the work done

- Dependent care (e.g. child care, 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

If you determine that you are a good telework candidate, talk to your supervisor and make a formal request by completing the **Telework Application Form (DOT 310-052)** and submitting it to your supervisor. A copy of the telework Application Form can be found on the WSDOT intranet site.

Deciding not to telework is not a failure, it doesn't work for everybody and that is okay.

How often can I telework?

Generally employees prefer to telework regularly one to three days a week but it can be less or more frequent.

What are possible concerns to consider with telework?**For the employee:**

- Possible feelings of isolation
- Fearing absence from the office may negatively affect career opportunities
- Requires special efforts to maintain communications and good working relations with colleagues
- Worrying that they may not be available for coworkers when needed

For the supervisor:

- Adapting to a shift in the culture of an organization
- May have to adjust the style of supervision
- Special efforts required to maintain team synergy
- Special efforts required to ensure communications and cross-fertilization of ideas
- Employees who remain at the office may require assurance that their own workload will not increase and that the telework employee will continue to fulfill all of his or her responsibilities
- May be an initial cost involved in establishing a telework situation (however many of these costs are recouped with less sick leave usage and increased productivity)
- Greater emphasis on long and short-range strategic planning
- Greater emphasis on work measurement and productivity

Sustaining a Successful Telework Program – An Employee's Perspective

What's in it for me?

Work/life balance

Telework gives employees more flexibility to meet personal and professional responsibilities.

Stress reduction

Telework can help make life less stressful overall by reducing commuting time and increasing discretionary time.

Fewer office distractions

Offices can be busy places where distractions are plentiful. Many employees find they are able to focus and be more productive when they telework.

Engagement

When employees feel they have greater control over their work environment, they report feeling more dedicated to their organization.

Know your telework expert

The agency telework expert is the key contact for telework policy and program questions. Employees should maintain contact with both their supervisor and telework expert for support and assistance as well as to ensure they follow the agency's policies and procedures.

How do I prepare for a discussion with my supervisor?

If you know your position is eligible, have taken the self-assessment and believe you are a good fit, then submit a telework application and talk with your supervisor.

Identify how the agreement will be good for you and WSDOT.

Know the WSDOT policy and procedures related to teleworking. Be familiar with these policies below to ensure you are in compliance with its requirements.

- [Executive Order: Employee use of Electronic Communication Systems E 1021.00](#)
- [Executive Order: Ethics in Public Service E 1004.00](#)
- [Policy Statement: Information Technology Security P 2017.01](#)
- [Commute Trip Reduction Manual M 3045](#)

Remember that a telework agreement must be made on a voluntary basis by both supervisor and employee. For a telework agreement to be successful, both parties must feel comfortable with it.

What is a telework participant agreement and do I need one?

Yes. You and your supervisor must first meet to discuss the telework application and, if the application is tentatively approved, work together to create the **telework participant agreement (DOT 310-050)**. This form can be found on the WSDOT intranet.

The telework participant agreement establishes roles and responsibilities between a telework employee and the telework supervisor. The agreement must be signed by the employee and supervisor prior

to beginning teleworking. However, in some divisions, if the director chooses so, the final authority rests the manager having delegated approval authority of your organization. A copy of the signed agreement and application should be kept by the supervisor and employee and, the originals sent to the Office of Human Resources and Safety (OHRS)

What is an 'official duty station?'

WSDOT defines an official duty station as *"the city, town, or other location where the employee's office is located or where the employee is assigned to work when not teleworking."*

How long does the participant agreement last?

The agreement will last one year or until any one of the following conditions occurs:

- The employee requests at any time in writing that the telework agreement be withdrawn.
- The supervisor informs the employee in writing that the telework agreement will be withdrawn seven days prior to the effective date of termination.
- Reasons for withdrawing the telework agreement include, but are not limited to:
 - Changes to the business needs require the employee's presence in the office
 - Change in supervisor
 - Change in job responsibilities
 - Employee work performance does not meet the stated expectations and standards
 - One of the provisions in the telework agreement or the telework handbook has been violated

- The agency no longer supports teleworking

If withdrawal is requested by the supervisor for reasons above, the **Disposition Form (DOT 310-053)** must be filled out with the documented reason and then submitted to Human Resources.

At least once a year, the employee and supervisor must review the telework agreement. The agreement may be reviewed more often if necessary. At this review, the employee and supervisor will determine:

- The work accomplished at the telework site
- Effect on customers
- Whether the cost of teleworking exceeds the predicted benefits.

After completing this review, the employee and supervisor must note that the original agreement is extended and that the review has been completed. Date and initials of supervisor is all that is needed. If there are any changes to the agreement, the updated agreement must be submitted to the telework expert. If continued as previously agreed there are not additional steps.

Is there a minimum of maximum number of days a week or month a teleworker can work at an alternative site?

The minimum to participate in the program is one day a month. It is encouraged to telework at least one day a week. Employees will work with their supervisors to determine frequency. The decision will be based on the ability to meet the business needs of the office.

What is the process for reconsideration if telework suitability is denied or changed?

Employees should make an effort to resolve telework suitability issues with their supervisor before submitting a formal appeal. During those conversations, the employee may request to have a union council representative present. Employee may submit a written appeal within fifteen (15) days of the determination or change to the HR Director or designee. The HR Director or designee will respond in writing within fifteen (15) days.

Can I still participate in the CTR program for days when I telework?

You will need to track that you teleworked through Rideshareonline.com. If you telework from home, you may not claim that day for the commute trip reduction (CTR) reimbursement/incentive. If you telework to an alternate worksite other than home, you may claim CTR if you carpool, vanpool, take the bus, ride a bicycle, or walk to the telework site.

How can I be an effective telework employee?

Establish a routine

Set a work schedule for the days you telework and stick to it as much as possible.

Set aside time for breaks—stretch, take a walk, or practice stress reduction techniques.

Replace the ritual of getting ready for the office with another ritual. As a telework employee, you'll no longer have the traditional office rituals of morning conversations, coffee runs, or even the commute that often symbolize the beginning of the workday. So, you may need to establish some new rituals.

Some telework employees take a walk around the block and return to the alternate site for work. Others play some music or start working after morning exercises. Find a ritual that will work for you.

Pace yourself so you don't burn out.

Make sure you're taking enough breaks. It's surprisingly easy to work without stopping. Be sure to practice some low impact stretching to keep from becoming overtired.

Be aware of bad habits such as snacking too often, sleeping late, talking on the phone for long periods, watching TV, wearing your pajamas all day, paying the neighbors or the refrigerator too many visits, and procrastinating. Avoid any temptations that slow you down.

Additionally, have an end-of-the-day ritual. It's wise to have some ritual that marks the end of the workday. Be creative.

Plan the work

Employees who telework 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.

Employees will need to plan their telework days to be as productive as possible by considering the following questions:

- What files or other documents will I need to take with me when I leave my regular workplace the day before teleworking?
- What equipment will I need to take?
- Who needs to be notified that I will be teleworking?
- What other steps should I take before I leave my office (e.g., forwarding the telephone)?
- Use Outlook calendar to reflect telework days and phone number.
- Track work tasks, breaks and lunch on Outlook.
- Note “telework” on office in/out board.
- Include contact information for telework days in outgoing voice mail message, or forward office phone to telework number (see page 17).
- Establish with your supervisor a system to follow (a phone call or email with subject “urgent”) when you cannot respond immediately.

A pre- and post-telework report is required. In basic terms, the report is the telework employee’s “to do list.” Develop a list of objectives for the days you telework and send to your supervisor before you leave the office for your next telework day. Write it the day before you telework. In addition, try to schedule your work so you don’t need assistance from others on your teleworking days. Remember that you may not have access to a fax machine, a copier, or even a computer (if it’s not necessary for your work), and plan accordingly. A post-telework report is also provided at the end of the telework day to your supervisor that outlines the tasks actually accomplished, unplanned tasks accomplished and tasks not accomplished.

Ensure effective communication

Supervisors are ultimately responsible for the effective functioning of the workgroup. Nevertheless, telework employees should help manage the group’s expectations and their own communication in order to avoid any negative impact from their arrangement. Make sure the office understands that you are available on telework days during designated hours. You should be as accessible at home as you are at the office. The people you work with should know how to contact you. The support staff should know where to refer callers and how to handle inquiries. Here are some tips to stay in touch:

Occasionally you may need someone who is physically in the office to assist you (e.g., to fax a document or look up information). These arrangements should not be unduly burdensome. Identify a “buddy” to help you when needed.

Avoid missing meetings at the office. You don’t want to become invisible just because you’re teleworking. Schedule your days at home around office meetings or participate in the meetings via conference call.

Establish expectations

Let everyone around you know that you are working at home and that you still have the same employee responsibilities. Tell family and friends that your objectives, goals and deadlines are the same; the only difference is that you can complete part of your assignments at home.

When working from home, be careful not to encourage continuous interruptions from friends and/or family.

You should decide when family members or others might interrupt your work to ask you questions, ask favors, or have you respond to some kind of request. Some telework employees have their families set the rules so that they can buy into the whole process.

Good Telework Habits

- Take teleworking seriously.
- Complete job tasks in your designated telework space.
- Adopt a ritual to start and end your day.
- Maintain a consistent schedule on teleworking days and to take breaks throughout the day.
- Plan telework tasks at least a day in advance.
- Log work completed on telework days.
- Limit interruptions by sharing your telework schedule with family and friends.
- Communicate regularly with supervisor and office staff.
- Stick to all deadlines.
- Maintain or increase performance and productivity on telework days.
- Attend department and group meetings.
- Inform your supervisor of your progress.
- If teleworking isn't working for you, talk to your supervisor.

The Bottom Line

Telework employees MUST:

- Comply with all existing policies and procedures including, but not limited to, records retention, acceptable use, information security and telework policies of WSDOT.
- Take responsibility for ensuring the success of their agreement.
- Notify the supervisor of any changes in their situation that may affect the agreement.

Telework employees MAY:

- Be asked to come into the official duty station at any time.
- Have their telework request not approved or withdrawn. Supervisors should provide written notification to the affected employee.

Telework employees MAY NOT:

- Assume a telework agreement is permanent.
- Use telework as a substitute for child or other dependent care.

CHAPTER 3

Teleworking from Home

Questions & Answers: There's no place like home... to do great work

Do I need a dedicated work space, or can I work wherever I want?

Dedicated space during work hours is required. The telework employee and his/her family must ensure that the home office is just that, a space designated for the employee to work. Your family responsibilities must be arranged so as not to interfere with work time at home.

Teleworking employees must maintain an in-home telework site in a safe condition. Ergonomic standards should also be maintained. If there are multiple locations in the home that meets these guidelines, then multiple dedicated areas are allowed.

Do I need child/dependent care to work from home?

Yes. A person other than yourself needs to provide care during your telework hours if you have a child or dependent at your home that needs continuous supervision.

How do I track my hours to show my supervisor I am working the right number of hours?

The rules around positive reporting of hours for overtime eligible or overtime exempt employees do not change with telework. Continue to follow the existing policies.

Am I required to be available at any time during my work hours?

Yes. You must be available during your scheduled work hours defined by your work

schedule. This includes being available for supervision as well as coworkers. Contact

information should be provided to your supervisor, coworkers and customers for your telework days.

When teleworking, can I be requested to report to my duty station?

Yes. Your supervisor can request (within reason) for you to return to your duty station on your telework day at any time for any reason. You can also be asked in advance to report to your duty station instead of your telework location. It is up to your supervisor if you can switch your telework day to accommodate the request.

Is traveling to my duty station considered work time?

No. If the request is made in advance of your telework day, travel to the duty station is considered commute time.

Yes. If the request is made during your telework day, travel to the duty station would be considered work time (like travel to a meeting) but the return trip to your home is considered commute time.

Can I work from home full time?

Full time telework maybe approved. Cases where this option is more likely are for medical reasons via a reasonable accommodation or you primary residence is a very long distance from your duty station. This decision will be made between you and

your supervisor and should involve HR and will be based on individual performance and business need.

How do I handle WSDOT or customer information when I'm teleworking?

The telework employee is responsible for maintaining confidentiality and security at the alternate workplace, as the telework employee would at the primary work place.

The employee must protect the security and integrity of data, information, paper files, and access to agency computer systems. If working from home, this may include a locking storage area or locking door to the office space. [State Information Technology policy](#) and [Internet and technology use policies](#) apply to teleworking, as they would in the primary work place.

There may be materials that should not leave the building like original documents with signatures, contracts, and payment invoices. Talk with your supervisor to determine if there is material that falls under this category.

Is my personal equipment subject to review during a public disclosure request?

If you save work-related files on your personal home machine and/or use your personal email for work-related communications, your personal equipment could be reviewed in an e-discovery records request. Following information policy (*Do not save work related information on your personal computer*) and using a remote access tool like Citrix from your personal computer will eliminate this issue.

I have paperwork that needs to be submitted. How do I get this to my supervisor?

The proper handling of paperwork needs to be discussed with the supervisor and included in the telework agreement as appropriate.

If I fall or have an accident at home, who is liable?

The employee's designated home workspace is an extension of the agency workspace only when used for work. Employees may therefore be covered for workers compensation if they are injured while performing work on behalf of the employer in the employee's home workspace during teleworking hours.

If an injury occurs during teleworking hours, the employee will immediately report the injury to the supervisor. The employee, supervisor and WSDOT must follow the state's policies regarding the reporting of injuries for employees injured while at work.

The state of Washington is not responsible for any injuries to family members, visitors, and others in the employee's home workspace. The telework employee may not have business guests at the alternate workplace or any other location except the agency's offices.

The state will not be responsible for any loss or damage to:

- The telework employee's real property, including any structures attached thereto
- any personal property owned by the telework employee or any of the telework employee's family members
- any property of others in the care, custody or control of the telework employee or their family members

The telework employee is responsible for contacting their own insurance agent and consulting local ordinances for information regarding home workplaces. Auto and homeowners insurance are the responsibility of the telework employee.

Does my home have to meet the safety-assessment requirements?

Yes. As a condition of permission to telework, the employee must verify that home facilities used for telework purposes are safe and suitable for purposes of the employee's work. Supervisors should not approve telework if the alternate worksite is not conducive to productive work.

WSDOT requires that the employee complete a **telework safety assessment (DOT 310-050)** as part of the application to telework. The checklist is necessary to reduce the state's exposure to risk and liability and helps the employee know if his or her alternate workplace is conducive to productive work. This form can be found on the [Telework Program intranet page](#).

To ensure that productive working conditions exist, it may be necessary for the employer to make on-site visits at mutually agreed-upon times. This may be handled by the appointed authority on a case-by-case basis.

May I alter my telework schedule for personal reasons, such as medical appointments or school conferences?

Work schedules must follow the conditions outlined in the collective bargaining agreement, position description, or other documents filed with the employer. Requests for leave or schedule adjustments

must be made in the same manner as if you were at your normal duty station.

Are there any situations where out of state telework would be approved?

Yes. Out of state telework may be considered case by case if there is a clearly defined timeframe and it is less than one year. Examples situations include caring for a sick family member; managing a family member's estate; your spouse or domestic partner move to except work in another state; and medical procedures/ care. This decision will be made between you and your supervisor and should involve HR. The decision will be based on individual performance and business need. Depending on the timing of this arrangement, an expectation may be made that the employee report back to the duty station for a determined amount of days to meet a business need.

Are there ergonomic considerations I should consider when working at home?

Yes. It is important to reduce and eliminate ergonomics-related injuries and illnesses. Here's a presentation to help set-up a work station:

<http://wwwi.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/ronlyres/F326AF0F-4884-4124-9B8B-B5F03EAB8101/0/ComputerWorkstationSelfEvaluation2>.

More WSDOT ergonomics education and training is available at:

http://wwwi.wsdot.wa.gov/Employee/Safety/ergonomics_training.htm

It is an expectation that your at-home workspace ergonomics are equal to or better than at the office.

CHAPTER 4

Teleworking from a Closer Office

Questions & Answers: *Want to reduce your commute by working at a closer office?*

Once I identify a WSDOT office that is closer to my home, who do I contact?

The employee will indicate the desired office on the telework Application form. It is the employees' responsibility to contact the alternate site and work out arrangements with that site. The employee will provide the information for the supervisor to consider and confirm if approved.

Will I have access to all of my current programs and systems?

Typically the alternate workstation will contain a standard set of programs that are available to all employees. If additional programs or access are needed, the telework employee should discuss this with their supervisor and Information Technology staff.

Will the workstation be set up to meet my needs?

Most workstations at an alternate site will be generic in nature. Since the workstation may be used to house multiple employees, it would be impossible to alter it to meet everyone's specific needs. If the workspace is not suitable, then it may not be appropriate for telework.

Depending on the frequency of telework, a primary, individually assigned workstation may not be needed for some employees.

Can I use the office supplies, fax and copier in the office where I go to telework?

The telework site agreement will need to specify what supplies and equipment will be provided. Typically the telework employee will bring the supplies needed for the telework days or replenish the supplies used.

Do I have to check in with someone there each day?

The supervisors at the alternate worksite are not typically responsible for monitoring telework employees. You will work with your supervisor to set expectations for regular communication. If there are special conditions that do require monitoring at the alternate worksite, they must be included on the agreement. If this need cannot be met, the supervisor can determine non-approval of the telework agreement.

How do I get access to the building?

The supervisor should work with the alternate site manager and make the needed arrangements.

Does an alternate workstation need to be closer to home to be considered for telework?

Yes. In some situations an alternate site may be more convenient because of reduced commute time or availability of public transportation.

CHAPTER 5

Technology and Equipment

Questions & Answers: Are you prepared to telework?

Do I have to provide my own computing equipment, or will the state provide it?

Most telework employees use their own personal equipment. You may also use state-owned computing assets (when available) to conduct WSDOT business. If you have been issued a state-owned laptop, it is advised to use it when teleworking. This is documented in the telework agreement.

The employee assumes all of the costs for teleworking including maintenance of personal equipment, virus protection software, high-speed Internet and incidental residential utility costs.

How do I request computing equipment for teleworking?

Telework employees should discuss equipment needs with his/her supervisor. The employer may not be able to provide or purchase all of the needed equipment. If equipment cannot be provided and the telework employee does not have personal equipment, the telework agreement may be denied.

Will someone assist me in setting up my computer?

Remote Access User Guidance is available on the intranet to assist you in setting up your computer. If you have trouble, contact the IT helpdesk. The IT helpdesk is only responsible in assisting with WSDOT owned tools and equipment. They do not have authorization to work on personal equipment owned by employees.

Can I use dual monitors if I work at home?

Yes. If you own dual monitors and are working with your personal computer via the remote access tool, Citrix. You will need to request this option through the IT helpdesk. Ask the help desk to create a remedy ticket for the Citrix – DOT group to be added to the “HQCitrix – RDP Monitors” group. This option is reserved for those that are using programs and applications that require more monitor real-estate such as Arc GIS and Microstation. The request will not be granted if you are only using the Microsoft Office.

You may also use your dual monitors via your state owned laptop if the equipment is set-up for that type of use.

Who do I call if I have computer problems?

Contact the IT helpdesk at 360-705-7050 for technical assistance. If the problem can't be solved in a reasonable time, inform your supervisor. If your remaining daily tasks are computer-dependent, you will need to report to your duty station for the remainder of the day. Leave usage can also be used if the computer problems cannot be resolved in a reasonable period of time. The IT helpdesk is only responsible in assisting with WSDOT owned tools and equipment. They do not have authorization to work on personal equipment owned by employees.

How do I make long-distance business calls?

If you are trying to reach a WSDOT office outside your local area, call your office administrative staff or main WSDOT front desk and ask to be transferred. If you are making business calls to customers outside of WSDOT, the employee should use a WSDOT issued cell phone (if approved) or use a Qwest WorldCard to make long distance work related calls. This must be obtained from IT-telecommunications and will need prior approval by a supervisor.

Can I forward my office phone to my telework phone?

Your office phone can be forwarded to your home phone if both places are in the same local area.

To **forward** your office phone to your home phone, dial *2 9 and the local number (example: *2 9 5557776). You will hear a three beep confirmation tone letting you know it was accepted.

To **un-forward** at your WSDOT office, dial #2. You will hear a three beep confirmation tone letting you know that your phone has been un-forwarded. You cannot un-forward your phone from a remote location. This must be done from your WSDOT office phone.

NOTE: This process may differ in the various regions. Please ask your Telecommunications expert in your region.

If I need to upgrade my home Internet, who pays?

The employee assumes all of the costs for teleworking including maintenance of personal equipment, virus protection software, high-speed Internet and incidental residential utility costs. WSDOT may pay for some costs on a case by case basis. This

must be discussed with the supervisor and documented in the telework agreement form. If IT needs cannot be met, telework may not be approved.

What type of Internet connection do I need?

If the majority of your job requires needing an Internet connection to perform your duties efficiently, then high speed internet access is recommended. To be productive at home, you must be able to access information quickly. Job positions that require use of large applications like Inroads and Microstation will require at least a 5.0 mbps connection.

If I am assigned a laptop, how do I transport it safely to protect confidential information?

Transport the laptop in the 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](#)

How do I connect to the network and applications I frequently use?

There are a variety of methods for connecting to the State network to gain access to your shared drives, as well as gaining access to the computer programs used in the execution of job duties.

Telework employees should discuss their computer program needs with their 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 safeword token, Citrix provides online access to WSDOT applications from **any computer**. Remote access form available on the intranet:
<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 laptop. Find more guidance on the intranet at:
<http://wwwi.wsdot.wa.gov/IT/Remote+Access+Options.htm>

CHAPTER 6

Safety and Security

Safety

As the telework location is an extension of the workplace.

Understanding home safety is critical. The home should be free of hazardous materials. Among other things, the wiring and gas lines should be up to the local building codes and structurally safe.

Telework employees must address issues of their own personal safety to be effective while teleworking from a home office or other remote location.

WSDOT employees causing or suffering work-related injuries and/or damages at the alternative worksite (home, telework center, or other location) must immediately report the event to their supervisor.

Supervisor safety responsibilities

Neither the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) nor WSDOT expect supervisors to inspect home office workspaces unless there is evidence that the workspace is unsafe. As stated in Section 3, the telework employee is required to sign a statement that proclaims the home safe for teleworking. If a site inspection is needed to ensure safe working conditions exist, this must be organized at mutually agreed upon times.

Telework employee safety responsibilities

It's important that you identify a safe location in your home as your workspace. However,

you don't need to devote a whole room to your work station. Some telework employees have successfully developed part of an existing room – a garage, an attic, even a closet – into their workstation. Don't try working on the couch in front of the television or on the dining room table all day long. It doesn't work.

Telework employees must:

- Provide appropriate telework space, with ergonomically correct set up.
- Complete a safety checklist (DOT 310-051) certifying the space is free from hazards. This checklist is not legally binding, but details management expectations and, if signed, assumes compliance. A sample of a safety checklist can be found in the Appendix.
- Immediately report any work-related accident occurring at the telework site and provide the supervisor with all medical documentation related to the accident. It may be necessary for an agency representative to access the home office to investigate the report.

Fire protection

The work area should be equipped with a smoke detector. Your smoke detector should meet the following criteria:

- The detector must be placed in a location that monitors the work area and any electronic equipment used to support teleworking.
- Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) and/or the State Fire Marshal must approve

the detector, with a function test mechanism.

- Detectors should be tested at the time of installation and on a monthly basis. Detectors that are wired into the house electrical system, and have a battery backup, should be checked with main power both on and off. Battery-operated detectors should be clean and equipped with fresh batteries as recommended by the manufacturer.

A fire extinguisher is required. The designated work area must be equipped with a UL approved fire extinguisher. The fully charged extinguisher should be made accessible within the work area (no more than 10 feet from electronic teleworking equipment).

Information Security

WSDOT employees and his/her supervisors are responsible for the security of State Government property and information, regardless of their work location. WSDOT security policies do not change and should be enforced at the same rigorous level when employees telework as when they are in the office. As in the official work station, security measures cover not only information

systems As in the official workstation, security and technology, but all aspects of information used by the employee, including paper files, other media, storage devices, and telecommunications equipment (e.g., laptops, blackberries, and cell phones). Employees who telework need to keep WSDOT property and information safe, secure, and separated from his/her personal property and information. Maintaining security of all WSDOT information, including files, correspondence, and equipment both in the telework location, as well as in transit to and from that location, is imperative. Never store WSDOT data on non-WSDOT owned or leased devices.

Supervisor Information security responsibilities

Periodically review telework agreements to ensure they are in compliance with agency records retention and information security policies.

- Ensure employees receive agency records retention and information security training.
- Ensure the WSDOT IT security training and Ethics training have been completed and the proper forms are on file.

CHAPTER 7

Sustaining a Successful Telework Program – Manager's Perspective

What's in it for me?

Management tool

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 organizational communications, telework can help employees and supervisors work more effectively in their positions.

For telework to be a successful tool, supervisors must be committed to using telework to the fullest extent possible.

Beyond the basic requirements, managerial skill, participation, and support can make telework a real asset to an organization.

Continuity of operations during bad weather or emergency

In the case of bad weather or natural disasters, employees could telework and avoid having to travel to a dangerous, inoperable or inaccessible office. During a pandemic, such as one caused by an influenza virus, employees could continue to work while achieving social distancing goals. Using telework as a workforce strategy in these situations can assist in continuing the essential operations of government during these difficult times. Telework practices may be altered during these events.

What are the basics?

Know your telework expert

The agency telework expert is the key contact for questions and coordination of activities and information. Supervisors should maintain frequent contact to ensure the agency's policy and procedures are properly applied and to ensure they are aware of the full range of support and resources available to them.

Know the policies and procedures

As detailed in [Executive Order 01-03](#), all state agencies must have a telework policy. Supervisors should familiarize themselves with WSDOT's Telework Policy E 1088 to ensure they are in compliance with its requirements. This handbook includes additional procedures for establishing telework agreements, obtaining equipment, etc. found in the previous chapters.

It is WSDOT's policy to consider telework arrangements for employees in suitable positions. Interested employees must apply and be approved to telework. Approvals are based on performance and/or business need.

Typically employees have interest in working remotely one to three days a week however the frequency maybe more or less.

Working from home or an acceptable location during those rare occasions (severe weather events, pandemic, etc.) that ensure continuity of operations (COOP) should be exercised to the greatest extent possible for employees in eligible positions. An agreement must be on file before an event for the employee to use this option.

It is important to distinguish between ordinary requests to telework and requests from persons with disabilities for a reasonable accommodation. Supervisors should know which is being requested in any given situation. The principle difference is that Reasonable Accommodation requests result disability or disabling condition. If there is any ambiguity about what is being requested, managers and supervisors should clarify that ambiguity at the outset. If the request is identified as a reasonable accommodation the supervisor should consult the WSDOT Statewide ADA Coordinator in order to begin the interactive process.

For more information see [Secretary's Executive Order E 1069.00: Equal Access for Persons with Disabilities](#).

Participate in training

Successful teleworking programs require management support in order to succeed. Specific management practices such as the ability to manage by results and skill in setting and communicating clear goals are essential.

Supervisors must be convinced of the benefits the teleworking program will provide them and they should be trained to effectively manage employees that telework.

Management buy-in and commitment are important prerequisites for the success of any teleworking program. Training programs through Department of Personnel that can help supervisors are:

- Long Distance Supervision
- Managing for Results
- Time Management

Not all of the above named courses are available on a regular basis. Follow normal processes for requesting subject specific training. Use this link to find courses offered by the Department of Personnel:

www.dop.wa.gov/Employees/TrainingAndDevelopment/AlphaCourseList.htm

WSDOT may also have applicable training available. Check the website for training: www.wsdot.wa.gov/HR/Employees/Training/default.htm

Determine telework suitability

[Job classifications](#) within the agency that do not reasonably align with telework have been identified by the telework expert and Human Resources management. This provides initial direction to supervisors on which positions could be telework-suitable.

From there, the management teams within HQ and the regions determine suitability of the *positions* based on if the responsibilities associated with the position can be, at any given time, conducted from a remote location. Please see the [determining suitability guidance document](#).

Some positions will not be suitable for telework, such as employees in positions that require, on a daily basis (e.g. every work day), 100 % on-site activity that cannot be handled remotely or at an alternate worksite. Examples include positions that require hands-on contact with machinery, equipment, vehicles, etc.; or other physical presence/site dependent positions.

Supervisors should assess who is and who is not eligible in their workgroup based on the employee's performance and the business need. Employees in suitable positions will have the ability to apply to telework. If an employee requests to telework and the positions in your office have not been reviewed yet to determine eligibility, then you must conduct that assessment. Then communicate the determinations to all employees before granting approval of the first employee volunteer. The determinations for the positions in the office must be complete within two weeks of the initial request.

Offering the opportunity to work from an alternative location is a management option.

Supervisors are encouraged to select those candidates who meet the criteria to be successful telework employees. Use the [determining suitability guidance document here of](#) in the appendix of this document.

Telework is voluntary. These employees will be granted an option to telework based on job functions and documented performance. Remember, treating people equitably does not mean treating everyone the same.

The approval process is outlined below. It is important to note that the decisions for approval need to be clearly documented in the provided forms and articulated to the employee. A formalized approach to approval is the avenue for which our employees understand why he or she was approved or not approved.

Create signed agreements

Each teleworker and his or her supervisor must complete a written agreement (WSDOT Form 310-051) for telework. However, in some divisions, if the appointing authority chooses so, the final authority rests with the manager having delegated approval authority of your organization. The Office of Human Resources & Safety, the employee, and the supervisor should keep copies of all telework participant agreements on file.

Telework participant agreements are living documents and must be revisited by the supervisor and employee and resigned at once a year. At a minimum, new agreements should be executed when a new employee/supervisor/ appointing authority relationship is established.

Base denials and withdrawals on business needs and performance

A short, regularly scheduled meeting to discuss how the telework arrangement is working from both the employee and employers' perspective can mitigate potential issues before they become critical.

Telework is not an employee entitlement, even if the employee's position is considered "eligible" by WSDOT policy, telework requests may be not approved and existing telework agreements may be withdrawn by the employee or supervisor at any time. However non-approval and withdrawal decisions must be based on changes in job duties, business needs, or employee performance. These decisions will be clearly documented and articulated to the employee.

When disapproving or withdrawing telework participant agreements via the disposition form, the notice should include information about what actions the employee should take to be reconsidered for telework. Notification should be provided within two weeks of the application submittal. A withdrawal notification via the disposition form is provided seven days before the termination date of the agreement.

An Appeal process

If an employee is denied a request to telework or is denied the ability to continue to telework, the denial and reason(s) will be in writing on a Disposition form. The employee may file a written appeal within fifteen (15) days. The appeal will go to the HR Director or designee. The HR Director or designee will respond in writing within fifteen (15) days.

If an employee files a written appeal, WSDOT OHR&S will send a copy of the appeal to the WFSE Labor Advocate assigned to WSDOT.

If a meeting is convened concerning the denial, the employee may request to have a WFSE Council Representative present.

TELEWORK ARRANGEMENT IN 8 STEPS FOR MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

Management with employees interested in arranging telework should follow these eight steps to complete the telework approval process.

1. Assess the positions in the unit to determine if any are suitable for teleworking and inform your employees of the determinations.
2. Direct interested employees in suitable positions to complete the [Telework Self-Assessment](#) to evaluate if they would be a good candidate for teleworking.
3. If the assessment finds an employee is a good candidate, the employee then completes the [Telework Application](#) and submits it to you.
4. Review completed application and use the [Suitability Guidance](#) and other tools on the Telework Program intranet page to determine if the employee is approved.
5. Inform the employee of their telework status within two weeks of receiving the application. If *tentatively approved*, confirm that the employee's IT and workspace needs can be met by coordinating with IT staff. Direct the employee to complete the [Telework Safety Assessment](#), [Telework Agreement](#) and the [Remote Access Request](#) forms.
If the employee is *not approved*, first discuss the determination with the supervisor and HR. Then inform the employee and provide notice using the [disposition form](#) within two weeks. Send the disposition form, documentation and application to HR to be included in the employee's personnel file. Inform the Telework Program manager of the decision.
6. If the employee is approved, meet with him or her to discuss and sign a [telework agreement](#).
7. After processing the agreement in accordance with your office procedures, send the completed telework application and agreement to [the Telework Program manager](#), provide the employee a copy and keep a copy.
8. Your employee begins teleworking on the agreed schedule. Continue to monitor compliance with telework policy and communicate regularly with the employee about how the arrangement is working.

Can I approve full time telework?

There is no limitation on how often eligible employees can telework. This decision is between the employee and the supervisor, based on business needs of the office and performance of the individual. Check with your Human Resource consultant before approving the request to ensure a change in duty station

is not warranted. This option is often used for reasonable accommodations or for employees that have a very long distance between their home and duty station.

Can I approve out-of-state telework?

Out-of-state telework may be considered on a case by case basis for WSDOT employees

who reside in state but need to work out of state for an extended period of time. A residence of Washington can be defined many ways including having a primary residence, a Washington driver's license, filing state or federal taxes in the state, or registered to vote. For a complete definition of a Washington resident go to the [Department of Revenue](#).

There must be a beginning and end date to the arrangement and it may not exceed one year. If the duration the employee is working out of state is longer than 12 weeks, he/she may be required to be physically present at their duty station for an agreed upon time and frequency. This request will be based on a business need.

Some examples where this arrangement may apply include an employee who is caring for a family member; managing a family members' estate; seeking medical treatment; or moving with a spouse or domestic partner who has taken a job outside Washington.

Discuss this decision with your manager, your human resource consultant and the manager having delegated approval authority of your organization before informing the employee. The decision must be based on business need and individual performance and clearly articulated to the employee.

How can I be an effective telework supervisor?

Many of the same attributes for successful telework employees also apply to successful telework supervisors.

Some supervisors of telework employees will have to modify his/her work habits to become successful in supporting the telework program. Characteristics of successful telework supervisors include:

- Good time management skills
- Strong managing by objectives skills

- Ability to establish and evaluate clear performance criteria
- Good interpersonal and communications skills.
- A mutual trust and respect in ongoing job relations with telework employees
- Results-oriented

Communicate expectations

The telework application and 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 understands each other's expectations about basic issues, such as:

- How will the supervisor know that the work is being accomplished?
- Will the employee be required to work core hours?
- What are the expectations for availability (by phone, e-mail, etc.)?
- How will contact be maintained and at what frequency?
- What equipment is the agency providing?
- What, if any, equipment is the telework employee providing?
- If equipment is provided, how is technical assistance and maintenance performed and by whom?
- What records and associated information will the telework employee need access to and how will they be accessed?
- What are the information handling expectations of the employee?
- What will the daily/weekly/monthly telework schedule be? Will the hours be the same as in the main office, will they be different, or is there flexibility? How will the supervisor and co-workers be kept updated about the

schedule? Do changes need to be pre-approved?

- What are the physical attributes of the telework office, and do they conform to basic safety standards? See the Appendix for a sample checklist that must be signed prior to entering into a telework agreement.
- What is the expectation regarding the amount of notice (if any) given for reporting to the official worksite, and how will such notice be provided?
- How is a telework agreement withdrawn by management or an employee?

Facilitate communication with workgroup

Teleworking and non-teleworking employees must understand expectations regarding telework agreements, including coverage, communication, and responsibilities. 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. Where 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 preserve communications and teamwork
- Ensure teleworkers remain aware of and involved in official events, decision making, discussions and planning.

Manage communication

Supervisors are ultimately responsible for the effective functioning of the workgroup. Nevertheless, 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:

- **Backup:** Even with very portable work there are inevitably instances where physical presence is required and a co-worker may need to step in. Co-worker backup should be planned, it should not be burdensome, and it should be reciprocal.
- **Cross-training of employees** has broad organizational benefits and should be a management priority.
- **On-the-spot assistance:** telework employees may occasionally need someone who is physically in the main office to assist them (e.g., to fax a document or look up information). Again, these arrangements should not be unduly burdensome; a "buddy system" between telework employees may be the least disruptive solution.

The supervisor must be kept apprised of the telework employee's schedule, how to make contact with the telework employee, and the status of all pending work. As a telework employee, you'll need to make sure that your supervisor is well informed of the status of your work. The pre and post telework report is required. If the telework report doesn't work for your supervisor, find additional ways to assure an uninterrupted flow of information.

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.

Remain equitable in assigning work and rewarding performance

Supervisors should avoid distributing work based on "availability" as measured by physical presence, and avoid the pitfall of assuming someone who is present and looks busy is actually accomplishing more work than someone who is not on site. Good performance management practices are essential for telework to work effectively and equitably.

Make good equipment decisions

Most telework employees will need little WSDOT equipment as his/her duties involve only the use of a standalone computer for office applications, internet access and a phone. Generally, employees will use their person equipment. If a state laptop is issued to an employee as the primary computer in the office, this can be used at an alternative location, and it is preferred.

If an employee requests state equipment, supervisors should discuss the job requirements with the employee and determine their equipment needs. Within those constraints, the challenge for supervisors is finding the right balance of budget, and effectiveness.

Practice, practice, practice

The success of an organization's telework program depends on regular, routine use. Experience is the only way to enable supervisors, employees, IT support, and other stakeholders to work through cultural, technology, equipment, communications,

workflow, and associated issues that may inhibit the transparency of remote work. Approving one day a week is a good starting point for supervisors who don't have experience managing teleworkers. After gaining experience teleworkers may request more days. Individuals expected to telework in an emergency situation should telework under non-emergency circumstances first. A telework agreement is not a right; it can be changed or withdrawn at any time.

How do I deal with multiple telework employees in a unit?

If there are positions in your unit or workgroup suitable for telework employees, more than one employee may be approved for the program. Be aware of how many telework employees you can manage at any given time. When too many people in one unit are working at an alternate site, scheduling meetings may become difficult.

Having multiple telework employees may place more demands on you as their supervisor, especially if remote supervision is new to you. Then, before you approve too many teleworking arrangements, you may want to gain experience with limiting the days of telework for each employee until you are more comfortable.

One option is to try working out a rotating schedule or have them work fewer days at an alternate site.

It is also a good idea, if you are a second line supervisor, to communicate with all supervisors in your unit about teleworking employees and their schedules. This will help to ensure over all office coverage.

Use good performance management practices

Clear Performance Expectations

Management expectations of an employee's performance should be clearly addressed in the employee's performance appraisal as well as before the telework agreement is executed. As with on-site employees, telework employees must, and can, be held accountable for the results they produce and their workplace behavior. Productivity at an alternative location should be equal to or better than at the office. Good performance management techniques practiced by a supervisor will mean a smooth, easy transition to a telework environment with successful outcomes.

The most successful philosophy for managing telework employees is that of management by results. The elements that should be built into this style of management are project schedules and key milestones, regular status reporting, peer and/or project team quality reviews, team participation in decision making, trust, and following the telework participant agreement.

The same principles of performance management: planning, coaching, evaluating, and developing, apply in telework environments. In fact, remote management is not much different from managing people on-site. It involves skills that include setting goals, assessing progress, giving regular feedback, and managing by results. Some supervisors have reported that his/her own overall management skills increased as a result of his/her experience with telework employees.

Use the telework report

Supervisors often ask, "How do I know what my employees are doing when I can't see them?" Performance standards for off-site employees are the same as performance standards for on-site employees.

To address accountability and perception, a requirement for telework is a telework report from the employee. In basic terms, the report is the telework employee's "To Do List." While the employee appraisal typically covers one year, the telework report will vary in scope with the needs of the supervisor. Reports should cover a day. Supervisors may require that Outlook calendars are up to date with all tasks reflected for a telework day.

A pre- telework report that reflects the tasks expected to be accomplished for the telework day is provided to the supervisor. A post- telework report is also provided to the supervisor that outlines the tasks actually accomplished, unplanned tasks accomplished and tasks not accomplished. The daily report will be sent via email by the employee to the supervisor the day before telework is scheduled and at the end of the telework day. The reports provide the supervisor with a clear understanding of what is to occur while the employee is teleworking. This is great planning and organization tool for the employee. Reporting also provides an opportunity for supervisors to generate discussion about priorities, work load, and team collaboration. All of the information provided in the telework reports can also help supervisors prepare annual employee performance evaluations.

Feedback for telework employee

It is important to hold regularly scheduled meetings with the telework employee to ensure that your expectations are being met and check-in on how the arrangement is working. As check-ins are conducted, changes can be made to the agreement as needed. Be direct about expressing your expectations. For example, if you must schedule a meeting on a telework days, tell the employee whether you expect him or her to attend in person or via audio conference

or that it's not necessary to attend. If there is a reason for unscheduled feedback, do your best to communicate as soon as possible. The employee and supervisor are successful when deliverables identified have been met and are on time. Make sure your employees know that you take the telework agreement seriously and expect them to as well. Avoid teasing teleworkers about "goofing off" or "getting away," etc. Teleworkers may already be anxious about how their teleworking may be viewed.

Preventing morale problems

There is often concern from supervisors about possible morale problems and/or grievances from employees who are not approved to telework. The approach for reducing the possibility of morale or grievance problems is using a clear set of criteria for eligibility – even if the criteria include subjective qualities such as independence – and discussing them openly with the whole staff. The approval process to telework provides opportunities for non-approved employees to develop the necessary criteria or actions need for approval. This not only gives the staff awareness of the approval process and selection, but also provides an incentive for improved performance among non-approved employees. All employees in eligible position should clearly understand the eligibility status of their positions. Employees who volunteer to telework and are not approved

should have a clear understanding why they weren't selected.

Legal issues regarding teleworking

Both state and federal wage and hour laws apply to teleworking employees. That poses quite a challenge for both employers and employees, particularly with respect to the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). If telework employees are overtime eligible or overtime exempt they are covered by FLSA rules. For overtime eligible employees, FLSA requires employers to pay for all hours work, even if those hours were unauthorized. Individual agency telework agreements should spell out the number of hours per day which telework overtime eligible employees are authorized to work. It also needs to require overtime eligible employees to obtain advance approval from the appropriate telework supervisor before accruing any overtime hours. The agreement should contain specific procedures governing how overtime eligible telework employees keep their time records and report them to the employer. Provisions regarding timekeeping should be strictly enforced.

The Bottom Line for Supervisors

Supervisors MUST —

- Implement routine telework in their organization to the fullest extent possible.
- Treat employees equitably in implementing telework in their organization.
- Identify eligible and ineligible employees using established agency criteria.

Supervisors MAY NOT —

- Under normal circumstances, require that an employee work remotely UNLESS the position is defined as a home-based position or other requirements (such as temporary/emergency office closure) deem it necessary.

Supervisors MAY —

- Withdraw a telework agreement, in writing, for business or documented performance/behavioral reasons.

Appendix

- A. Telework self-assessment
- B. Telework Forms
 - Application
 - Agreement
 - Safety checklist
 - Disposition form
- C. Eligibility Guidance
- D. Sample telework report

How to Determine Eligibility for Teleworkers

Managers can determine telework eligibility by identifying who can reasonably carry out their job functions at home or an alternative work station. Job classifications within the agency were identified that do not reasonably align with telework, providing initial direction for telework eligibility.

Managers refer to CQs to determine eligibility of positions in each unit. Management may determine other positions are eligible, depending on the responsibilities at any given time and suitability for work at remote locations. Managers should select employees for telework strategically to ensure business needs are met before the employee is determined eligible. Eligible employees will be granted an option to telework based on job functions and documented performance.

STEP ONE:

Managers and/or managers with delegated authority identify *eligible positions*, positions with tasks that can be performed remotely without impacting service quality or operations. Position eligibility is subject to change.

Review the CQ for a position and look for task/duties or responsibilities (in part or full) where the individual works independently. Responsibilities that are good for teleworking include:

- | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| ✓ accounting | ✓ editing | ✓ report writing |
| ✓ analyzing data | ✓ evaluations | ✓ research |
| ✓ auditing reports | ✓ graphics | ✓ email |
| ✓ calculating | ✓ work planning | ✓ software development |
| ✓ computer programming | ✓ preparing budgets | ✓ spreadsheet analysis |
| ✓ phone work | ✓ programming, monitoring | ✓ typing |
| ✓ data entry | contracts | ✓ word processing |
| ✓ design work | ✓ project management | ✓ web training |
| ✓ drafting | ✓ reading | ✓ writing |

If a position is determined *eligible*, notify the employee. If the position is determined "*ineligible*" consult with the Director of the division for concurrence. If the decision remains, inform your Human Resource (HR) Consultant.

STEP TWO:

Supervisors and/or managers determine *eligible employees, those working in eligible positions*, who have been identified by each employee's supervisor as meeting performance standards, terms and conditions of employment of their position. The employee shall have no active formal disciplinary and/or corrective actions on file for the current or immediately preceding appraisal period.

Once the *position* has been determined eligible, an interested employee may complete the Self-Assessment and submit an Application. The supervisor determines if the employee is eligible. Review the characteristics of a successful teleworker below and then complete the checklist that follows to guide the eligibility determination.

Characteristics of a good teleworker

- require minimal supervision
- require minimal social interaction
- high level of job knowledge and skill
- prefer their home environments at least sometimes
- are self-motivated
- want to telework
- are well organized
- demonstrate a high level of productivity
- comfortable working alone
- have a reliable work history
- have a full understanding of the operations of the organization
- trust their supervisors
- establish priorities and manage their time
- like to work independently
- write a to-do list for each work day
- schedule/plan work ahead
- know job goals and objectives
- keep in touch with supervisor
- let supervisor know when a deadline can't be met

If the employee is determined *eligible*, tentatively approve the application and ask the employee to fill out the agreement and Safety forms for approval (follow approval process). If an employee is determined "*ineligible*" for reasons other than performance, consult with the telework expert to discuss. If the employee is still determined "*ineligible*", due to performance or other reasons, supervisors must consult with his or her direct manager for concurrence. If the decision remains, inform the manager with delegated authority and consult with your HR Consultant before talking to the employee.

A disposition form must be filled out and all documentation attached (follow approval process). The employee is notified within two weeks of applying that he or she is does not have approval to telework.

EXAMPLE OF TELEWORK REPORT

Subject: Pre-telework email (send the day before the telework day)

Hi. I'm teleworking 6:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. tomorrow. Below are the items I plan to work on.

Planned tasks for Thursday, July 28

- work plan for the next year
- finishing the edits to the telework handbook
- reading Telework in the US report
- review Sustainable Transportation text book
- meeting with co-worker to check in
- working on getting the telework form fixed
- drafting email for managers about telework tools and their locations
- read and respond to emails
- send email to external telework colleagues to check in and give status update
- catch up on reading related news/reports etc. stuck in my email box

Subject: Post-telework email (send the end of a telework day)

Hi. I'm taking off for the day. Below are my accomplishments. See you tomorrow.

Planned tasks accomplished

- work plan for the next year
- finishing the edits to the telework handbook
- reading telework in the US report
- meeting with co-worker to check in
- working on getting the telework form fixed
- drafting email for managers about telework tools and their locations
- read and respond to emails

Unplanned tasks accomplished

- participated in meeting on local plan review
- talked with employee about their PMP and work plan

Planned tasks not accomplished

- send email to external telework colleagues to check in and give status update (will be done August 1)
- catch up on reading related news/reports etc. stuck in my email box (low priority)
- review Sustainable Transportation text book (low priority)