

Making Telework Work



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Introduction

Many organizations allow employees to work in offices located off-site and within employees' homes. This is often referred to as "Telework," and has become more popular as organizations look for ways to respond to business continuity among other things (including eco-friendliness).

To make Telework successful, managers and employees must make adjustments to some work practices in teleworking situations.

All employees who telework, should have telework agreements in place.



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Business Drivers for Telework

- Governor's priority
 - > Code of Virginia, General Provisions 2.2 –2.03.1.
- Business Continuity during emergency situations.
- Improved Recruiting and Retention of new and current employees.
- Cost savings including reduced costs and impacts for:
 - > Overhead.
 - > Real estate.
 - > State infrastructure.
 - traffic, and other resources.



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ROI of Telework

- Improve organizational efficiency.
- Increased productivity – telework can increase the quality and quantity of work.
- Boost employee morale and job satisfaction.
- Lower employee turnover.
- Expand management skills by integrating new management approaches.
- Provide continuity of operations during emergency situations.



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Telework Guidelines

- Telework assignments do not change the condition of employment.
- Teleworkers are required to comply with state policies.
- Teleworkers must work the same designated number of hours.
- Requirements and approvals are the same as non-telework staff for:
 - Working overtime.
 - Making schedule adjustments.
 - Using leave.



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Successful Teleworker Habits

Habits that make teleworking successful include:

- Using effective time management skills – create a schedule and goals for each day.
- Be organized – have your resources available to you for working.
- Use strong written and verbal communication skills – be sure to be clear in your written and verbal communications with others to avoid misunderstandings.
- Finding a quiet and appropriate space for teleworking – be sure to consider noise and ergonomics such as appropriate lighting, seating, work surfaces, etc.



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Managers - Managing by Results

Managing teleworkers requires managers to focus on management approaches including:

- Rethink and Redesign the way certain jobs are performed – an in-office process may need to be redesigned when performed outside of the office.
- Focus objectives and expectations on goals and expected results.
- Plan meetings and other team activities to include phone and web meeting connections. When meeting “electronically”, be sure to include all team members in the discussion.



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Managing by Results (cont.)

- Transition teamwork toward more electronic-based collaboration. Phone, Google Hangouts, and other technology tools enable collaboration tools and help to maintain team connections.
- Discuss expectations in advance.
- Establish regular means of communications to clarify work expectations, deadlines, questions, and office updates.
- Track progress by results.
- Reinforce positive behavior and continue to coach and develop your employees!



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How do I know that teleworkers are working. . .

- Focus on results and outcomes.
 - > Assignments are finished.
 - > Deadlines are met.
- Set objectives.
- Review how goals are met.



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Communication

- You may want to assign a more experienced teleworker to serve as a “mentor” for employees new to teleworking.
- Establishing a clear understanding of the following can help keep both teleworkers and on-site employees informed, connected and involved:
 - How often teleworkers will “check in” with the office.
 - How often teleworkers should check their phone and email messages.
- Replace in-person discussions with audio, video, and other web based discussions. Continue to communicate using these tools to maintain connections among team members.



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Telework Do's

- Trust your employees.
- Manage by results.
- Include teleworkers in daily activities.
- Encourage communication between all team members.
- Set the example by teleworking yourself.
- Seek your own support system, such as mentors and coaches.



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Telework Don'ts

- Make “curfew” checks.
- Ignore or neglect your teleworker.
- Set unrealistic deadlines or goals.
- Ignore problems.



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Summary

- It is extremely important to keep teleworkers informed and feeling part of their workgroup, department and agency.
- Having technological resources and planning on how to handle technical difficulties is critical to the successful management of teleworkers.
- Tips for the effective management of teleworkers include:
 - Having a good knowledge of our Telework policies.
 - Setting and enforcing clear ground rules and expectations.
- Telework assignments do not change the conditions of employment or required compliance with policies.