

# Sample **TELEWORK POLICY**



## Sample Telework Policy for Employers

The sample telework policy on the following pages will give you guidance as to how to structure a formal telework policy within your company or organization. You can modify the policy as needed, replacing the words EMPLOYER with your business name and customizing the content to fit your needs.

## EMPLOYER NAME Telework Policy

EMPLOYER has established a telework business strategy to examine how teleworking can contribute to organizational objectives and employee well-being. These guidelines offer direction for teleworkers, employees not teleworking, and management.

### Purpose

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

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

### Eligibility

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

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

- Employee responsibilities
- Need for, and nature of, interaction with other staff and external clients
- Need for use of specialized equipment
- Employee job performance

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

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

Eligibility and suitability of employees to participate in teleworking will vary among departments and business units, depending on the function and responsibilities of the employee.

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

## Schedules and Hours

Telework hours may be different from office work hours, however, teleworkers and their supervisors must agree on the designated work hours. A regular teleworking schedule, including specific days and hours, must be established by the teleworker and approved by their supervisor. Generally, a teleworker will spend one to two days working from home with the remainder of the scheduled hours working in his/her office on EMPLOYER's premises. The amount of time the teleworker is expected to work per day or per pay period will not change due to participation in the teleworking program.

Overtime hours must be pre-approved in writing by the supervisor. Deviations from the agreed upon schedule must be approved in advance by the supervisor. EMPLOYER policy will be followed for all absences. Teleworkers are responsible for keeping and submitting accurate records of their work hours.

Supervisors retain the right to require a teleworker to return to EMPLOYER's office on a regularly scheduled teleworking day should work situations warrant such an action (usually for meetings). If a teleworker is required to return to EMPLOYER's office during regularly scheduled teleworking days frequently, the supervisor may re-evaluate the compatibility of the teleworker's position and job responsibilities with respect to teleworking or the specific teleworking schedule.

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

## Workspace

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

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

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

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

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

## Equipment and Supplies

EMPLOYER-owned equipment at their off-site workspace with the prior approval of their supervisor provided that the equipment will be used for EMPLOYER work only and its use by a teleworker at his/her off-site workspace will not impede the work of employees working at the EMPLOYER office.

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

EMPLOYER will reimburse teleworkers for other business-related expenses, such as long-distance phone calls, shipping costs, etc. that are reasonably incurred in accordance with job responsibilities and approved by the supervisor in accordance with EMPLOYER's regular policies. Appropriate documentation is required if such expenses are submitted for reimbursement. Human Resources will work with teleworking employees to ensure that appropriate arrangements have been made for discounted long distance telephone services.

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

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

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

## Employee Access and Availability

Teleworkers must be available by telephone or email during scheduled hours, with the exception of their scheduled lunch period. Teleworkers are required to have voicemail to ensure availability.

Teleworkers are required to modify their EMPLOYER voicemail announcement to indicate that they may be reached at an alternate number or that the employee will be regularly checking messages. Supervisors may establish that employees are required to check for messages within a certain period (e.g. at least once every two hours). Teleworkers must keep their supervisor notified of any changes to their home contact information.

## Income Tax

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

## Security

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

Teleworkers agree to allow an authorized EMPLOYER representative access to the home work area during prearranged times for business purposes as deemed necessary by the supervisor, including safety inspections, equipment installations and repairs, security assurance, retrieval of EMPLOYER property, and performance evaluations. To ensure hardware and software security, all software used for teleworking must be approved by the supervisor prior to installation. All software used for teleworking must be virus inspected and each PC must have virus protection software installed. EMPLOYER owned software may not be duplicated unless authorized through the license agreement. Restricted access materials shall not be taken out of the office or accessed through the computer unless approved in advance by the supervisor.

## Liability

It is the responsibility of the teleworker to maintain a safe, professional work site at home that is free from potential safety problems. Teleworkers must certify that their home is free from workplace hazards by completing a safety checklist. In the case of an injury while working at home, teleworkers must immediately (or as soon as circumstances permit) report the injury to his/her supervisor or the Human Resources Department and request instructions for obtaining medical treatment.

## Application Process

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

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

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

Likewise, if an employee elects to discontinue a teleworking arrangement, the employee should provide notice to his/her supervisor.

Employees that are teleworking at the time this policy is adopted will be permitted to continue teleworking. Existing teleworkers will need to sign the Teleworker Agreement and complete the associated documentation that is required of all teleworkers.

## Evaluation

Teleworkers will be required to participate in all studies, surveys, training, inquiries, reports and analyses relating to this program.