

Setting it up Right – Telework and Hybrid Work



TWIN CITIES

Telework

Commuter Services has extensively studied and sought counsel on national best practices for teleworking, and helped employers of all sizes set up telework and flexible work arrangements.

Telework is all about work. Period. Not where the work is done.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a sweet spot for the number of days an employee should telework to maximize productivity, teamwork and business continuity, and that was a predictable one to two days per week.

We think that can easily become two to three days per week going forward with the right foundation.

Successful telework and hybrid work arrangements include:

- A formal telework/flexible work policy
- A teleworker application
- A pre-telework discussion
- A memorialized teleworker agreement
- Ergonomic and home office recommendations
- Training for managers and teleworkers

Telework succeeds when the job is right, the employee is self-motivated, the technology is in place and the manager manages by deliverables.

Telework is not a substitute for childcare or dependent care. Telework is not sending people home to never see or hear from them again. And most importantly, it is not an employee benefit, perk or right. Telework is all about work. Period. Not the place where the work is done.

Telework is a business strategy. It is not an employee benefit, it is not an employee right. It is a workplace strategy.

Your telework policy can help you with equity. Point to your policy for clarification on what jobs are eligible and state employees must meet or exceed their job expectations to be eligible to telework. Clarity and transparency from leadership should address telework eligibility.

Your telework policy should describe what types of jobs are a fit for telework. If the job primarily involves a computer and/or phone, the job could be a good fit. Your policy should state telework is only for appropriate jobs, and for employees who meet or exceed job expectations with a strong likelihood to succeed based on their work styles and the approval of their manager.

Ideal employees for telework are those who know the company, and who have been meeting or exceeding job expectations. The best teleworkers are employees who are self-motivated, good communicators and deliver their work on time.

Do not send poor performers home to telework. There is nothing sacred about telework. If an arrangement is not working, change it.

Telework is not for everyone. An employee might be self-motivated but not thrive in a remote work environment. Some people thrive in a bustling office, where others do their best work in a quiet environment free from distractions.

Managers need to be comfortable managing remote workers in order for telework or hybrid work to be successful. They need to manage by deliverables and establish communication standards, i.e., what time frame should emails and calls be answered within? It's also imperative that managers deal with problems as they arise.

In order for teleworking to be successful for everyone, employers must provide the proper training for teleworkers and managers so they know what you expect and how to handle challenges.

Commuter Services has a free webinar training for managers called: Getting it Right – Best Practices for Teleworkers and Their Managers. You can access it at: <https://www.tctelework.com/webinars>

Have questions or need resources? We provide free telework materials and are here to help.