



Telework Best Practices Guide



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BACKGROUND

In developing the DoIT telework policy, several best practice tools have been identified. These are collected here to help both managers and employees effectively work in this environment. Where telework has proven successful, several components have been identified:

Have Flexibility – Both managers and teleworkers must be willing to be flexible with their schedules based on the business need.

Have clearly defined expectations – It is critical that both agree how productivity and performance will be measured for a teleworker. These are critical in ongoing support of the program

Be willing to experiment – Successful telework arrangements must have managers and employees who are willing to try new methods of supervision and measuring employee performance and productivity. They must be willing to experiment until they find the right balance for both the organization and the employee.

Be motivated and self-starting – An employee who wants to telework must be able to make a strong case and present justification to his/her manager. A critical component is to be engaged with on-site colleagues to ensure that all remain productive.

Technology must be available, reliable, and appropriately leveraged – Telework relies to a large extent on technology—high-speed internet access, mobile and land line telephones, and safe accessible networks, to name a few. The technology, and support, must be in place to ensure the success of a teleworking environment.

OVERVIEW OF SUITABLE POSITIONS AND JOB ASSIGNMENTS

How do you decide which employees can and should telework?

First, look at the kind of work they do. The types of tasks most suitable for telecommuting are portable; they can be performed from anywhere. Given the appropriate communications and computing capabilities, most jobs contain some tasks that can be performed as easily from home as they can from the office.

Assignments appropriate for telework include, but are not limited to:

- Analysis
- Auditing
- Batch work
- Calculation
- Computer programming
- Conducting business by phone
- Data entry
- Design
- Documents (writing, editing)
- Evaluations
- Graphics
- Proposals
- Research
- Transcribing

SUGGESTED CRITERIA FOR SELECTING POSITIONS APPROPRIATE FOR TELEWORK

In making decisions about which positions are appropriate to designate or approve for telework, managers should thoroughly analyze the duties of positions and how the work is preformed.

Generally, the following types of assignments may be appropriate for telework:

- Require independent work
- Require little face-to-face interaction
- Require concentration
- Result in specific, measurable work products
- Can be monitored by output, not time spent doing the job

SUGGESTED EMPLOYEE QUALITIES FOR TELEWORK

Once a decision is made that a position or job assignment is appropriate for telework, managers should review the work qualities of employees requesting telework duties.

Generally, employees who are successful in telework:

- Are able to work productively on their own
- Are self-motivated and flexible
- Are knowledgeable about the job
- Have a low need for social interaction
- Are dependable and trustworthy
- Have above average performance records
- Are organized
- Have good communication skills

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SUGGESTED CRITERIA FOR SELECTING TELEWORKERS

The tasks that are successfully managed in telework programs are those where the individual already works alone handling information, such as writing, reading, analysis, telephoning, computer programming, word processing, data entry, or jobs involving considerable work-related travel. The suggested questions and/or criteria below should be explored when considering a potential telework position.

TOPIC	QUESTION	Y	N	N/A
KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED	Does the employee have the knowledge to perform the necessary job tasks at home?			
	Does the employee need continual supervision or input from others that is only available at the official headquarters?			
PUBLIC / AGENCY CONTACTS	Is any portion of the job devoted to face-to-face contact with other agencies, the public or internal department staff?			
	Can this contact be structured to allow for communication via phone, or grouped into non-telework days, or can alternatives be established to provide this contact on telework days?			
REFERENCE MATERIAL	Is any portion of the job predicated on the use of reference materials or like resources located in the official headquarters?			
	Can these resources be easily removed and taken home for a day or two without interfering with the job performance of others that may use these same resources?			
	Can these resources be duplicated for long-term use?			
	Are these resources available through other means such as a computer accessible library service or a community or university library?			
USE OF COMPUTERS	Will response time on computer equipment used at home be fast enough to allow for required productivity?			
	If main-frame access is needed, does the correct network connection capability exist?			
	If long-distance "dial-up" is necessary, is the cost prohibitive?			
	If connection to a Local Area Network (LAN) at the official headquarters is required, are the necessary hardware components in place and setup in a secure fashion?			
	Will the equipment issued by the State be sufficient to meet the needs of Telework?			

TOPIC	QUESTION	Y	N	N/A
SPECIAL EQUIPMENT	Does any portion of the job rely upon access to specialized equipment, i.e., photocopiers, fax machines, etc.?			
	Can these needs be met on non-telework days, or be serviced by a facility near the employee's telework work site at no additional cost to the state?			
INFORMATION SECURITY	Does any portion of the job use secured or classified information?			
	Can the integrity of that secured information be upheld if data is taken off site?			
TASK SCHEDULING	Can tasks which can be completed away from the official headquarters be grouped and scheduled for teleworking days?			
	Can staff meetings and conferences be grouped and scheduled for non-teleworking days?			
TRAVEL	Does the job involve field work?			
	Can trips begin or end at the employee's telework office rather than at the official headquarters?			
	Can paperwork be done away from the official headquarters?			
WORK TRAITS	Potential teleworkers should be further screened for the following work-related characteristics:			
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A history of reliable and responsible discharge of work duties; 2. Full understanding of the operations of his/her work area; 3. The ability to work independently; and 4. A demonstrated ability to establish priorities and manager his/her time. 			
Finally, supervisors should determine if their own management style is based on objective measures or work output, or if it depends instead on methods involving close physical observation of employees at work. Jobs where work is defined in terms of products delivered are better suited to telework than jobs where output is secondary to attendance.				