

# STATE OF MARYLAND

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## TELEWORKER'S MANUAL

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# TELEWORKER'S MANUAL

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1. Suggestions for Setting-up the Home Office
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## **MANUAL USER OBJECTIVE**

This manual is designed to assist employees in making a successful transition into the agency teleworking program. This manual contains the actual State of Maryland Teleworking Policy in addition to information related to how teleworking relates to other human resources policies.

Additional information includes suggestions on setting-up your home office, the locations of available Telework Centers, and a discussion on how teleworking impacts the workplace.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The federal government has been a pioneer in developing and implementing teleworking programs. It has developed a manual that describes a step by step plan to implement teleworking, and workbooks to assist in training teleworkers and their supervisors. Much of the information contained in this manual has been taken verbatim from materials developed by the Federal government. In some instances, state regulations and procedures have been substituted for the Federal counterpart. In other instances, Federal forms, guidelines, etc. are presented unchanged.

A special debt of gratitude is owed to Wendell H. Joice, Ph.D. U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) for preparing the Federal material, sharing it with the Maryland Department of Budget & Management, and thus, providing the foundation for this manual. Acknowledgements are also extended for information/documentation provided by: Ellen Russell, U.S. Office of Personnel Management; Maxine Sterling, U.S. General Services Administration, The Joint National Council of Field Labor Locals-Management Flexiplace Task Force, U.S. Department of Labor.

## **PART I - OVERVIEW**

### **A. BACKGROUND**

Teleworking is an arrangement between an employee and the employee's supervisor which allows the employee to work at home, a satellite office, or at a Telework Center on selected work days. The State of Maryland has recognized the benefits of teleworking and has recently passed legislation mandating teleworking for certain State employees.

House Bill 870 (Chapter 466 - 1999 Session) requires the Department of Budget & Management to adopt policies to implement a teleworking program for State employees. This manual contains the State's teleworking policy and should be used as an implementation guide for supervisors as they begin to allow employees in their units to telework.

The manual is designed to provide answers to a teleworker's basic questions about teleworking and to explain how teleworking fits into current work place policies. If you still have questions about teleworking after reading this manual, please contact, Ms. Sheryl Hagood, the Statewide Teleworking Coordinator at (410) 767-4976.

### **B. AGENCY PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS**

State law requires each agency in the Executive Branch of State government to meet a participation goal of allowing 10% of all "eligible employees" to telework. Eligible employees are those employees in jobs most suited for teleworking (e.g. data analysis, writing reports, and making telephone calls).

The Telework Steering Committee, comprised of representatives from various agencies, will determine the number of "eligible employees" in each agency and then determine the participation goal of each agency.

## C. TELEWORKING BENEFITS

*"Our increasingly diverse work force struggles to manage . . . personal commitments, while working conditions become even more important. Recent studies suggest that our ability to recruit and retain the best employees -- and motivate them to be productive -- depends on our ability to create a satisfying work environment . . ."*

Former Vice President Gore,  
National Performance Review

The State has recognized the changing nature of its workforce and has begun to focus on ways to increase productivity while improving the quality of employee worklife and morale. Teleworking is a nationally recognized way to make the workplace more "family friendly" while improving both the workplace and the environment. In addition, teleworking is a powerful tool for recruiting and retaining valuable employees.

Most teleworkers report that they get more done and are more satisfied with their jobs as a result of teleworking. The shortened commute decreases employee travel expenses and commuting stress, while enhancing the quality of worklife and increasing the amount of time teleworkers have for professional and personal pursuits.

Teleworkers also enjoy a greater degree of work-related autonomy and responsibility. Properly handled, teleworking can make it easier to manage dependent care arrangements and create job opportunities for employees with disabilities.

In addition, teleworking has proven to be an effective tool for promoting environmental conservation by decreasing traffic congestion and automobile related emissions. Additionally, telecommuting usually results in the more efficient use of office space as less office space is needed to maintain the workers. Employees often can alternate the sharing of office space with other teleworkers.

There may be tax advantages to working at home. You should consult with your tax advisor for additional information.

Overall, teleworking has many benefits. The State has recognized these benefits and has developed this program so that the State, as an employer, can lead the way to a cleaner environment through a more flexible and productive workplace.

## PART II - TELEWORKING POLICY

### STATE OF MARYLAND POLICY

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**SUBJECT: Teleworking**

**Effective: 7/1/99**

**Revised: 5/1/07**

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**OPSB Executive Director**

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**AUTHORITY: Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 17.04.11.02 B (1) (a).**

#### **1. STATEMENT OF POLICY**

- 1.1 The State has a teleworking program which allows selected employees to work from home, a satellite office, or a Telework Center on an occasional basis.
- 1.2 Each agency will attempt to allow at least 10% of eligible employees to telework.

#### **2. DEFINITIONS**

- 2.1 Eligible Employee - An employee in a job identified, by the employee's supervisor, as being suitable for teleworking.
- 2.2 Main Office - The Teleworker's usual and customary worksite.
- 2.3 Remote Workplace - A work site other than the employee's usual and customary worksite (Main Office). The remote workplace may include the employee's home, a satellite office, or a Telework Center.
- 2.4 Telework Center - A facility that offers office-like work stations and electronic equipment that may be used by State agencies to house Teleworking employees.
- 2.5 Teleworker - A person who, for at least four days a month, works at home, at a satellite office, or at a Telework Center to produce an agreed upon work product.

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2.6 Teleworking – Working at a location other than the employee's usual and customary worksite.

### **3. EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION**

- 3.1 The supervisor will determine which employees are in jobs suitable for teleworking.
- 3.2 At the discretion of the supervisor, employees in jobs suitable for teleworking may be permitted to telework on designated days.
- 3.3 Teleworking is voluntary and may be terminated by the employee or the supervisor at any time.
- 3.4 Before allowing an employee to telework, the employee's supervisor shall review with the employee the following:
  - (i) the Agency Teleworking Agreement (Attachment 2);
  - (ii) the Remote Workplace Self-Certification Checklist (Attachment 3); and
  - (iii) the Teleworker Work Plan (Attachment 4).
- 3.5 The employee shall be required to complete and return, to the supervisor, the Agency Teleworking Agreement and the Remote Workplace Self-Certification Checklist before teleworking.
- 3.6 Before each day at a remote worksite, the supervisor and the teleworker should complete a Teleworker Work Plan, identifying the assignments to be completed while the employee is teleworking. (Attachment 4).

### **4. EMPLOYMENT**

- 4.1 The teleworker's duties, obligations, responsibilities and conditions of employment with the State will be unaffected by teleworking.

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- 4.2 The teleworker's salary, retirement benefits, and State of Maryland sponsored insurance coverage will remain unchanged by the teleworking arrangement.
- 4.3 All work hours, overtime compensation, and leave usage must conform to the Annotated Code of Maryland, Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), the provisions of the State of Maryland Teleworker's Agreement, and to the terms otherwise agreed upon by the employee and the supervisor.
- 4.4 The teleworker must have the pre-approval of the teleworker's supervisor before working overtime at a remote workplace.
- 4.5 The holding of work-related meetings while at home is not permitted.

### **5. EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES**

- 5.1 The teleworker must have a telephone and a designated work space with appropriate equipment and supplies to do the assigned work at the remote workplace.
- 5.2 The teleworker is not required to provide equipment, software, and supplies.
- 5.3 Agencies may provide the teleworker with the following equipment:
  - 5.3.1 laptops;
  - 5.3.2 desktop computers;
  - 5.3.3 printers;
  - 5.3.4 modems;
  - 5.3.5 faxes;
  - 5.3.6 scanners;
  - 5.3.7 cables; and
  - 5.3.8 software.
- 5.4 Equipment purchases must be related to the performance of the teleworker's specific teleworking job duties.
- 5.5 Before purchasing equipment, other than that specified in Section 5.3, agencies must receive approval from the DBM Office of Budget Analysis.

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- 5.6 Agency equipment provided to an employee shall remain the property of the agency and shall be returned to the agency upon the termination of an employee's participation in the telework program.
- 5.7 The use of equipment, software, data, supplies and furniture, if provided by an agency, is limited to use by authorized persons and for purposes related to State business only.
- 5.8 The teleworker will be responsible for the security of all items furnished by the State.
- 5.9 The teleworker shall obtain from the main office all supplies needed for work at the remote workplace.

### **6. WORK SPACE**

- 6.1 The teleworker must have an area designated as work space.
- 6.2 The work space should be maintained in a safe condition, free of hazards that might endanger the employee or agency equipment.
- 6.3 The supervisor shall require that the teleworker complete and return the Remote Workplace Self Certification Checklist (Attachment 3).

### **7. EXPENSES**

- 7.1 Work related long distance phone calls should be planned for in-office days.
- 7.2 At the discretion of the supervisor, expenses for long distance calls, which must be made from a teleworker's home, may be reimbursed if the reason and cost for the call are documented.
- 7.3 The teleworker is responsible for the cost of maintenance, repair and operation of personal equipment, not provided by the State.
- 7.4 Expenses for supplies regularly available at the main office will not be reimbursed unless pre-purchase approval has been granted by the teleworker's supervisor.

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### **8. LIABILITY FOR INJURIES WHILE TELEWORKING**

- 8.1 The teleworker is covered under the State's Workers' Compensation Law for injuries occurring in the course of the actual performance of official duties at the remote work place.
- 8.2 The teleworker or someone acting on the teleworker's behalf shall immediately notify the teleworker's supervisor of any accident or injury that occurs at the remote workplace.
- 8.3 The agency and the supervisor should then follow the State's policies regarding the reporting of injuries for employees injured while at work.
- 8.4 The agency is not liable for damages to the teleworker's personal or real property while the teleworker is working at the remote workplace, except to the extent adjudicated to be liable under Maryland law.

### **9. CHILD/DEPENDENT CARE**

- 9.1 Teleworking is not a substitute for child or dependent care.
- 9.2 The teleworker must continue to make arrangements for child or dependent care to the same extent as if the teleworker was working at the main office.

### **10. INSPECTIONS**

- 10.1 The supervisor may make an on-site visit to the teleworker's remote workplace for the purposes of determining that the site is safe and free from hazards and to maintain, repair, inspect or retrieve agency-owned equipment, software, data or supplies.
- 10.2 Before an inspection of the remote workplace, the supervisor shall provide the employee with at least 24 hours notice of the inspection.
- 10.3 Inspections shall only be made during normal work hours.

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## **11. CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

- 11.1 The teleworker and the supervisor shall take appropriate safeguards to secure confidential data and information.

## **12. DISCIPLINE**

- 12.1 The State's disciplinary procedures and drug and alcohol policies are not affected by an employee's status as a teleworker.
- 12.2 An agency may take appropriate disciplinary or adverse action against the teleworker for failing to comply with the provisions of the Agency Teleworking Agreement.

## **PART III - ASSESSING THE DECISION TO TELEWORK**

### **A. General**

If your supervisor has given you the option to telework, there are many different things you should consider before agreeing to participate in the program. Teleworking is not for everyone. Before making your decision, you need to consider the impact of teleworking on you, your supervisor, and your co-workers. In addition, you should consider the effects of teleworking on your family.

### **B. The Impact on You (the Teleworker)**

As previously mentioned, teleworking offers numerous benefits to teleworkers, including reduced stress and enhanced quality of worklife. It also raises certain concerns such as the teleworker's isolation from co-workers. Many teleworkers will not know the extent of their social needs until after they have been in the program a while.

Some teleworkers report some initial feelings of loss of professional identity as well as self-esteem (ironically, because they missed the spontaneous interaction and the reduced level of performance feedback by their supervisors). In addition, some teleworkers perceive (accurately or inaccurately) that their teleworking will lead to reduced visibility with their supervisors and, consequently, reduced opportunity for promotions and/or desirable job assignments. Some employees may also fear that they would be a prime candidate for elimination in a climate where the State is looking for ways of downsizing.

There are likely to be changes in the frequency, spontaneity, mode (telephone or E-mail as opposed to conversations in person), and length of typical work-related communications for beginning teleworkers. Because of these changes, the effectiveness of communications becomes more important. Teleworkers may find that they have fewer, but more productive meetings. This makes meetings more valuable and teleworkers are likely to improve their preparation for and participation in meetings.

To resolve, effectively, the "out of sight, out of mind" concerns and to achieve the quality of communications necessary for successful teleworking, open dialogue about these issues and joint planning between you and your supervisor must take place. Also, your telework schedule should be individually tailored to provide a satisfying balance of time spent at the remote worksite and the main office. Establishing core hours in the main office will allow you to participate in meetings and to have access to main office facilities and resources (including staff support and people resources). Generally, the teleworking arrangement should address your needs for being informed about projects, advancement opportunities, and events that may occur in the main office on teleworking days.

Teleworking is a flexible program. You should remain flexible about the program, especially during the initial adjustment period. This will enable you to find the optimal arrangement for your personality and job requirements. This will also enable you to be responsive to unexpected contingencies which may require a change of schedule.

Energized by their increased productivity, some teleworkers fall into the trap of workaholism, sometimes to prove to their supervisors or co-workers that they are working hard on teleworking days. Some teleworkers report feeling a sense of guilt about not being in the main office. The quality of work and family life benefits of teleworking may be negated by the effects of workaholism. Being aware of this possibility, you may avoid the tendency to work inappropriately long hours by keeping in mind the family benefits of teleworking, and ensuring regular breaks.

### **C. The Impact on Co-workers**

Not only are the supervisor and teleworker affected by a teleworking arrangement, but co-workers are as well. Co-workers may have work assignments which involve the teleworker or which result in workload changes due to the teleworker's relocation. Some co-workers may feel resentment at not having been selected as teleworkers and/or may harbor misconceptions about teleworking. For example, some co-workers may think that the teleworker doesn't work on teleworking days, that the teleworking day is, in effect, a day off work.

Preventing or overcoming co-worker concerns, misconceptions, and/or resentment is an important challenge for both the teleworker and the supervisor. To the extent possible, you and your supervisor need to include co-workers in your teleworking planning process, provide for open communication between all parties, and keep co-workers informed of the your schedule and of any changes that occur in the teleworking arrangements. The teleworking arrangement should provide for convenient means of communication between you and co-workers. You and your supervisors should be careful not to burden other employees with additional responsibilities such as faxing, copying, or attending meetings.

As part of their adjustment, it is common for co-workers to compensate for teleworkers' absence by increasing the frequency of communications. This increase usually levels off after new routines and patterns are established. Eventually, co-workers are likely to save their messages and contact the teleworker on a single occasion instead of several times throughout the same day or week. When a co-worker is nearby, a problem or question may seem urgent enough to cross the aisle or hall to discuss immediately with the teleworker. When that same teleworker is out of the main office and must be reached by telephone, some people realize that the information isn't needed immediately. The physical separation created by teleworking can be enough to encourage employees to reconsider the need to interrupt another person and recognize when issues, that initially seem urgent, can be resolved at a more convenient time.

This saving of messages has been cited as a benefit of teleworking. In addition to decreasing

interruptions, many people find the self-imposed delay enables them to organize their thoughts more thoroughly before sharing them with others and/or to solve the problem themselves.

#### **D. Impact On the Supervisor**

Studies have indicated that there is not "one best management style". It is important, therefore, for you to consider your supervisor's communication and management style when planning, interacting, and working in a teleworking arrangement.

Some supervisors require more interaction with staff members while others prefer to let employees work with little direct supervisory input. Either of these styles can work well if the supervisor and teleworker incorporate the supervisor's style in the plans and procedures they establish. For example, how and how often the teleworker should check with the supervisor will depend on the supervisor's style preferences.

You will need to take an active role in raising and maintaining your supervisor's comfort level about teleworking and ensuring mutual trust and accessibility. This may require that you make special efforts to increase your productivity, meet deadlines, and produce a quality work product.

#### **E. Assessing the Impact of Teleworking**

Before deciding to telework, you should ensure that you know answers to the following questions:

1. To make your teleworking arrangement a success, what changes do you think will have to be made by you, your supervisor, your co-workers, your family, and your customers?
2. What concerns do you think your supervisor may have about the teleworking arrangement?
3. How might your co-workers respond to your teleworking arrangement?
4. What issues or apprehensions do you think your customers may have about a teleworking arrangement?
5. How will you manage teleworking so that you maintain your level of service and availability to your customers and co-workers?
6. What can you do to avoid or overcome any teleworking difficulties and make the teleworking arrangement beneficial to everyone?

## **PART IV - STEPS TO TELEWORKING**

### **STEP 1: Your Position Must be Suitable for Teleworking**

Not every position in classifications identified as suitable for teleworking may be equally well-suited. For example, one position in the classification of Administrative Officer may require the analysis of survey information (suitable for teleworking) while another position may require extensive contact with agency clients (not suitable for teleworking).

Your supervisor determines which, if any, positions in the work unit are suitable for teleworking.

#### **Jobs appropriate for teleworking:**

- have face-to-face interactions which can be scheduled on specified days;
- have clear work objectives;
- do not require immediate feedback; and
- benefit from quiet or uninterrupted time.

#### **Possible teleworking tasks:**

analysis	evaluations	spreadsheet analysis
auditing reports	graphics	typing
calculating	preparing budgets	writing
computer programming	preparing contracts	
data entry	project management	
design work	reading	
drafting	record keeping	
editing	research	

### **STEP 2: Your Work Habits Must be Suitable for Teleworking**

Not all employees in positions identified as suitable for teleworking will automatically be allowed to telework. Your supervisor will make the final decision regarding your ability to telework.

Teleworking is not suitable for new employees, for employees who require on-the-job training, for employees who need close supervision, or for those who thrive on interaction with co-workers.

Employees who telework should be organized, highly disciplined, and conscientious. These employees should be self-starters who require minimal supervision. Their performance during prior

performance evaluation periods must be at least "meets standards".

Personality traits will usually remain the same when working offsite but may become more apparent. If employees are hard workers, they may work even harder as teleworkers. If employees have difficulties with their attitude or work performance, then these difficulties may increase after they become teleworkers.

**Teleworkers are:**

- self-motivated and responsible;
- results oriented;
- able to work independently;
- familiar and comfortable with their job requirements;
- knowledgeable about the organization's procedures;
- successful in current position;
- effective communicators;
- adaptable; and
- committed to teleworking.

**STEP 3: Know the Teleworking Policy**

Part II of this manual contains the State of Maryland's Teleworking Policy. It is important for you, as the teleworker, to be familiar with this policy. This manual will answer many of the questions you may have about the teleworking program. If you have additional questions, you should discuss them with your supervisor. Then, if you have additional questions that your supervisor cannot answer, you should contact your Agency Teleworking Coordinator.

If you do not know your Agency Teleworking Coordinator, contact your agency's central human resources office or contact Ms. Sheryl Hagood, the Statewide Teleworking Coordinator, at 410-767-4976.

**STEP 4: Review the Agency Teleworking Agreement (Attachment 2)**

The Agency Teleworking Agreement is the document that outlines the telework expectations of the teleworker. Your supervisor should review the Agreement with you. Once you have reviewed the Agreement and are confident that you understand its provisions, you must sign the agreement before being allowed to telework. Your supervisor will keep the signed Agreement and provide you with a copy.

You should remember that teleworking does not have to occur on a weekly basis. Teleworking can be as infrequent as one day a month if you do not have enough work that can be

performed at home on a regular basis. The most important thing to remember is that you and your supervisor have to agree on your teleworking schedule that is suitable for you and your agency's needs. Ultimately, your supervisor determines which days you will be allowed to telework.

## **STEP 5: Choose Your Remote Worksite**

You have three options to choose from when you decide your remote worksite. You can work from:

- ◆ your home;
- ◆ a satellite office; or
- ◆ a Telework Center.

If you choose to work from your home, you will have to set-up a home office which will meet your work needs. See Attachment 1 for suggestions on setting-up your home office. You may use your own equipment if you have it. Your agency may or may not provide you with equipment (computer, fax, modem, etc.). If your agency will not provide you with equipment that you believe you will need to work at home and you don't own it yourself, you will have to either work at a satellite office or a Telework Center.

A satellite office is simply a State facility that is located closer to your home where you would be allowed to work during your teleworking days. Of course, you and your supervisor will need to obtain the appropriate agency approvals to use the office space.

A Telework Center is a fully equipped office that is designed to assist teleworkers work closer to their homes. See the list of Telework Centers in Maryland and the amenities that these Centers offer users.

If you would like additional information about a Telework Center or to set-up a teleworking arrangement at a Telework Center, contact the Maryland National Guard Telework Center Help Desk Coordinator, at 410-702-9615.

**STEP 6: Complete the Remote Workplace Self-Certification Checklist  
(Attachment 3)**

Before you will be allowed to telework, you will have to complete and return, to your supervisor, the Remote Workplace Self-Certification Checklist. Your supervisor will keep the signed Checklist and provide you with a copy.

**STEP 7: Complete the Teleworker Work Plan with Your Supervisor  
(Attachment 4)**

Supervisors are encouraged, but not required, to complete a Teleworker Work Plan before each day you are allowed to telework. The Work Plan clearly identifies the assignments that you will be expected to complete while teleworking.

**STEP 8: Maintain Open Communication with Your Supervisor**

## **PART V - OVERVIEW OF GENERAL TIME, ATTENDANCE, AND PAY ISSUES**

### **Certification and Control of Time and Attendance**

Supervisors must report time and attendance to ensure that teleworkers are paid only for work performed and that there is an accounting of absences from scheduled tours of duty.

Agencies must provide reasonable assurance that the employees are working when scheduled. Such assurance can be achieved by supervisor determination of the reasonableness of work output for the time spent, or by occasional supervisor telephone calls or visits during the employee's scheduled work hours at the Telework Center or the remote worksite. The technique of determining reasonableness of work output for the time spent is consistent with Managing for Results, the State's Performance Evaluation Plan, and is recommended by experts on teleworking. Once again, it is highly recommended that your supervisor use the Teleworker Work Plan (Attachment 5) in order to plan your activities.

### **Emergency Release**

A teleworker may sometimes, but not always, be affected by an emergency requiring the main office to close. For example, on a "snow closing day," the agency should not excuse a teleworker unless he or she cannot perform work because the main office is closed. When both the main office and the remote worksite are affected by a widespread emergency, the agency should grant the teleworker an excused absence as appropriate. When an emergency affects only the remote worksite for a major portion of the workday, the agency can require the teleworker to report to the main office, approve annual leave or leave without pay, or authorize an excused absence.

### **Overtime**

The existing rules on overtime remain in effect, and the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) applies to teleworkers. However, you should only work overtime with advance approval of your supervisor. Your teleworking privileges may be canceled if you work unapproved overtime.

## **Pay and Leave**

Existing policies on pay and leave apply to teleworkers.

## **Position Descriptions and Performance Standards**

Teleworking will seldom require major changes in position descriptions, but may affect factors such as supervisory controls or work environment. Performance standards for teleworkers should be results-oriented and should describe the quantity and quality of expected work products and the method of evaluation. Generally, supervisors will use the same measures for teleworkers and regular employees who perform similar tasks in the main office.

## **Work Schedules**

The existing rules on hours of duty apply to teleworkers. The supervisor determines employee work schedules consistent with the requirements of the agency.

You and your supervisor should agree on the days and times that you will work in each setting. The schedule can parallel those in the main office or be specific to the worksite. For example if you work from 7:00 am to 3:30 pm at the main office, you may be assigned the same schedule when working at home, a satellite office, or a Telework Center. Alternatively, you may be assigned to work from 9:30 to 6:00 or some other schedule at home or at a Telework Center. As long as the schedules are consistent with agency policies, the variety of these schedule combinations is unlimited and should be geared to your personal and job requirements. The process of establishing work schedules should be sufficiently flexible to permit periodic adjustments, if any, to achieve an optimal schedule suiting you and your agency's requirements.

Published opinions by teleworking experts suggest that it is beneficial for teleworkers to spend at least part of the workweek in their main office. It is thought that this periodic presence in the main office will minimize isolation and communication problems; give the teleworker access to equipment, services, etc. not available at the remote workplace; facilitate integration of the employee with those in the main office; and, also, ease supervisor adjustment to the new work arrangement.

## **PART VI - SECURITY ISSUES**

### **A. Security Issues at Telework Centers**

Security is an important topic for teleworking. Typically, Telework Centers are generally not as controlled as main worksites. A high degree of attention and/or adherence to security procedures, precautions, and issues at remote worksites is, therefore, advisable or required.

Three areas of security on which teleworkers and their supervisor's should focus are:

- ◆ Personal: safeguarding the teleworker
- ◆ Information: safeguarding confidential, privacy act, and/or classified information
- ◆ Property: safeguarding teleworker property and/or State property

General and technical information on security issues, procedures, and precautions can be readily obtained from agency security officials. The objective of this section is to sensitize you to security considerations. Adequate security is more than hardware and procedures; it is also a mindset that leads to common sense precautions. Everyone involved with the program, therefore, should be familiar with the array of security precautions and who is responsible for each precaution. Teleworkers should know what actions must be taken and take them when there is a breach of security. Supervisors and teleworking program officials should ensure that agency security officials and/or procedures are tied into the program.

You should use good judgement regarding personal security at the remote worksite. Teleworkers should be aware of and comfortable with security at the remote worksite. You should confirm that security is available at the hours being worked and that there is an adequate response to security breaches. Don't assume that any person accessing or attempting to access the remote worksite is an authorized visitor. As stated above, remote worksites do not have the same controls as main worksites; teleworkers need not be paranoid, just careful.

## B. Sensitive Information

- ◆ Telworkers must use authorized containers for storing sensitive materials.
- ◆ Teleworkers should be careful not to walk off and leave sensitive information (hardcopy information or information displayed/accessible on computer equipment) unattended.
- ◆ Although it may be socially awkward, teleworkers should be conscientious about covering up sensitive information when approached by visitors.
- ◆ Telephones present a security issue because conversations can be easily intercepted. Telephone lines at the alternate worksite may not be secure. Teleworkers should not use such telephones for discussing certain types of sensitive information.
- ◆ Managers and teleworkers should ensure that sensitive information is removed from computer equipment before it is serviced.
- ◆ In order to allow teleworkers to access sensitive information from alternate worksites, organizations should obtain certification from appropriate officials that the alternate worksite provides adequate protection for this information. These officials should also certify that the teleworker's use of sensitive information conforms to applicable laws or policies. Additionally, these organizations should revise the appropriate record system notices to indicate that the alternate worksite is authorized for access to sensitive information.
- ◆ Teleworkers should follow agency-specified procedures for disposal, transfer, or distribution of storage media that contain or *have contained* sensitive information. *Teleworkers should not trust software deletion commands* (such as "remove", "erase," or "delete"). Even though information may be indicated as "deleted," it can still be retrieved in certain situations.
- ◆ Teleworkers should use effective passwords and change passwords frequently. Passwords, such as persons, places, things, or other words that can be closely identified with the teleworker, should not be used. Also, the longer a given password is used, the higher the risk of it being compromised.

## C. Other Precautions

- ◆ Only hardware/software configurations authorized by an approving official should be utilized at the alternate worksite.
- ◆ Program officials and/or teleworkers should ensure that anyone who uses or services the alternate worksite is authorized and/or escorted.
- ◆ Managers must ensure that the designated workspace or workstation of the employee has adequate physical or environmental security measures to prevent unauthorized access. This can be accomplished by requiring the teleworker or the telecenter administrator to specify the proposed remote work area and certify, in writing, the security measures that will be used.
- ◆ Dial-up (modem) telecommunication access to State computers presents special security concerns. A combination of physical controls, unique user identifiers, passwords, terminal identifiers, access control software, and strict adherence to security procedures is required to protect the information from unauthorized access.

- ◆ Organizations should consider conducting a risk analysis as part of their preparation for implementing teleworking programs. Risk analyses are conducted to determine the adequacy of security measures and to provide additional recommendations or requirements as needed.

## **PART VII - QUESTIONS FOR TELEWORKERS**

### **I know I'm working hard, but how will my manager and co-workers know?**

Teleworkers can enhance organizational awareness of their accomplishments by: identifying tasks and deadlines with the supervisor and meeting those deadlines, ensuring that their work is discussed in staff meetings or other forums, communicating regularly with managers and co-workers, and exercising diligence in progress reporting. In some cases, teleworkers will have to refine their skills and methods of progress reporting. Teleworkers' work products and/or detailed progress notes (written or verbal) should be the indicators that they are working according to agreed-upon expectations. Teleworkers and their managers should focus on the quality, quantity, and timeliness of work products.

### **How can I maintain interaction and relationships with my co-workers?**

Staying connected with co-workers can be very important. Regularly scheduled days in the main office each week may help maintain communication between teleworkers and co-workers. Teleworkers should encourage co-worker communication on teleworking days; there should be no attempt to hide or downplay participation in the teleworking program. Hiding the program only serves to increase any co-worker feelings of resentment. *Finally, teleworkers should not become rigid and 'holed-in' to their teleworking arrangement. Remaining flexible will facilitate teleworker accessibility and relationship with the organization.*

### **How much work should I bring with me on teleworking days?**

More than you think you can do. Most teleworkers are surprised by how much they can accomplish when they don't have the interruptions, distractions, and stress associated with being in and getting to the main office.

### **What do I do if an emergency meeting is called on one of my teleworking days? What if a crisis occurs?**

To the extent that you can, get to the meeting or arrange attendance through teleconferencing. Teleworkers and telemanagers need to incorporate flexibility into the way they manage teleworking. Managing last-minute meetings or crises is an issue that should be addressed as you establish teleworking procedures with your manager.

With a teleworking program, managers know where employees are and can usually reach them by phone. Many managers say the planning that goes with teleworking eliminates some crises entirely.

## **PART VIII - QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT TELEWORKING**

Listed below are several, general questions and answers about teleworking. These are designed to answer any lingering questions about teleworking. If a subject is not covered, contact the Statewide Teleworking Coordinator for additional assistance.

**1. What is teleworking?**

Teleworking is a program that provides employees the opportunity to work all or part of the workweek (generally on a regular basis) at remote worksites away from the main worksite. Typically, the remote worksite is the employee's home, office, or a Telework Center geographically convenient to the employee's home. Working at a remote worksite is called "teleworking" and such workers are called "teleworkers." As a general rule the supervisor and the teleworking employee agree on a particular work product.

**2. What types of jobs or tasks are suitable for teleworking?**

Generally, any job that has tasks that are portable and can be performed away from the main worksite is suitable for teleworking. In addition, jobs which have set starting and stopping times that are easy to define, where face to face contact can be planned and scheduled are generally suitable. The teleworker and the supervisor can determine which specific tasks are suited to teleworking.

**3. What types of employees are suitable for teleworking?**

Employees who require minimal supervision, are organized, moderately people-oriented, possess a high level of skill and knowledge of their jobs, and who have family situations conducive to working at home, are suitable candidates for teleworking.

**4. What are the criteria for participating in the project?**

The job must be suitable for teleworking, the employee must be suitable for teleworking, the employee must want to telework, and the supervisor must be willing to allow the employee to telework.

**5. How will a supervisor monitor the work of an employee who is at home or at an remote worksite?**

With quantifiable tasks, quantity and quality should be measured as it is currently being done in the office. For non-quantifiable or project-oriented tasks, measurement normally would involve:

- ◆ establishing the nature and objective(s) of the task;
- ◆ setting a deadline or due date; and
- ◆ setting progress or status report/meeting dates.

It is recommended that supervisor and the teleworker complete the Teleworker Work Plan (Attachment 5) before each day the employee teleworks.

**6. If selected for the program, will there be changes in the teleworker's pay, benefits, sick leave, or overtime?**

No. Salary benefits and job responsibilities will not change when participating in the program. Current agency procedures for annual, sick or other forms of leave, and working overtime will continue to apply.

**7. Do teleworkers have to buy their own equipment (e.g. computer, modem, fax machine)?**

The determination of whether an employee is required to buy his/her own equipment is to be made by each agency. An agency may loan an employee the equipment necessary to perform the job, or if an employee already has the required equipment, the agency may agree that the employee may use his/her own equipment. Also, many jobs may be performed without the use of special equipment.

**8. Should a specific schedule be set for off-site work?**

Generally, employees and supervisors should agree on a specific day(s) and times the employee will work off-site. However, the work to be completed should be the controlling factor and scheduling should be arranged accordingly.

**9. Will teleworking eliminate the need for dependent care?**

No. Teleworking is not a substitute for child or elder care and employees should continue to make the same arrangements as if working at the main office.

**10. Must teleworkers remain in the project for the duration of the project?**

No. Either the teleworker or the teleworker's supervisor may terminate the teleworking arrangement at any time with reasonable notice or as agreed.

**11. Will allowing some employees to telework have a negative impact on employees who remain at the office?**

The overall interests of the office must take precedence over working off-site. One person's teleworking should not be permitted to adversely affect the work of employees at the main office. The teleworking employee's co-workers should be coached and counseled prior to beginning the program so that potential resentment and envy is minimized.

**12. Is teleworking a good way to employ disabled persons?**

Yes. Many employees with disabling conditions or injuries are often able to work but experience difficulty commuting or working in a regular office setting. Permitting a disabled employee to telework can supplement current efforts to accommodate the employee and provide another method of ensuring that an employee is able to work effectively.

**13. What are the benefits of teleworking?**

There are many general benefits to teleworking, and there are benefits that will be specific to your organization and staff. Some examples might be:

1. Improvements in employee morale and effectiveness.
2. Reductions in transportation costs including car insurance, maintenance, and wear.
3. Retention of skilled employees and reduction in turnover due in part to increased job satisfaction.
4. Accommodation of employees with short or long-term health problems or family responsibilities, such as problems associated with elder care and latchkey children. However, employees should be reminded that teleworking is not a substitute for child or elder care.
5. Cost savings to the State in regard to office space, sick leave absences, and energy conservation.
6. Employees can better use their peak productivity periods within the limits of established laws.
7. Reduction in automobile-created air pollution and traffic congestion.
8. Potential for increased productivity.
9. Improved work atmosphere due to fewer co-worker nonbusiness interruptions.
10. Tax advantages to working at home.

**14. Does an employee have a right to be a teleworker?**

No. Teleworking participation is not a right. Management is responsible for deciding if the position is one that is appropriate for work at a remote job site and for examining both the content of the work and the performance of the employee. Because this is a management work option, there is no automatic right of an employee to continue participation in the event of a change of supervisor.

**15. Can a supervisor participate in the telework program?**

Yes.

**16. Who is liable for work-related injuries and/or damages at the remote worksite?**

As a general rule, the State is liable for work-related injuries incurred in the performance of official job duties. State employees suffering work-related injuries and/or damages at the remote worksite are covered under the State's Workers' Compensation Law.

**17. What should a supervisor consider before agreeing to a teleworking arrangement?**

The supervisor and worker should examine the job requirements and determine what tasks can be accomplished at a remote worksite. Additionally, the supervisor should determine

- if the employee has the skill and knowledge of the job to work at the remote site;
- if the employee needs work-related input or support that is only available at the main office;
- the availability of equipment, as well as related costs necessary to support an employee at a remote worksite;
- how the employee can meet the requirements for necessary face-to-face contact or other types of main office contact required by the job; and
- policies and procedures necessary to ensure the integrity and security of information.

**18. How will work performance be monitored? Will teleworking lead to a decline in work performance?**

Generally, teleworking performance should be monitored in the same way main worksite performance is monitored. Optimally, performance should be monitored on a results-oriented basis. The supervisor will have to carefully plan and identify the nature and objective of the task, perhaps by establishing deadlines or arranging for progress reports and meetings. Most studies of teleworkers have reported that teleworking job performance equals or exceeds pre-teleworking performance.

**19. Should a specific schedule be set for work at the remote worksite?**

Yes. All work schedules are discretionary and require management approval. A pre-set schedule of teleworking work hours should be established prior to the employee working at the remote worksite. Temporary teleworking assignments or changes in work schedule may be made at management's discretion to meet work needs or to accommodate the employee.

**20. What if a supervisor or a teleworker believes the teleworking arrangement is not working?**

Teleworking arrangements are not a right or condition of employment. Management may end an employee's participation in the teleworking program if the employee's performance declines or if the program is detrimental to an agency's needs. Also, the employee may end participation at anytime without cause.

**21. Will the employee be reimbursed for utility expenses associated with a remote worksite?**

No. The State assumes no responsibility for the teleworker's expenses related to heating, electricity, water, and space usage.

**22. What equipment will the employee need at the remote worksite and who will provide it?**

The needed equipment and who will provide it will vary by situation. Generally speaking, agencies are not required to provide equipment at remote worksites. Each agency must establish its own policies on the provision and installation of equipment.

**23. Are there restrictions on the use of State-owned equipment, software, or information at an remote worksite?**

Yes. State-owned equipment can be used for official purposes only. Teleworkers must adhere to all rules, regulations, and procedures relating to security and confidentiality of work-related information and data. Agencies must maintain appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to ensure the security and confidentiality of the records. The Agency should revise appropriate records to indicate that the remote worksite is authorized for the use and maintenance of classified or confidential information and data.

**24. Who is responsible for maintaining and servicing State or privately-owned equipment used at the remote worksite?**

Generally, the State will be responsible for the service and maintenance of State-owned equipment. Also, generally, teleworkers using their own equipment are responsible for its service and maintenance.