



WORK LIFE PROGRAM

No. 03-01
Effective Date July 1, 1996
Revised Date January 28, 2003
Authorized by


Trudye Morgan Johnson, Executive Director

TELEWORK PROGRAM

Telework is a type of alternative work arrangement offered under the Commission's Work/Life Program. It provides an opportunity for employees to work from a site other than the traditional office or workplace. While employees generally telework from home, satellite office locations also may be used. Telework is a voluntary work arrangement based upon job function suitability and approval of management.

Telework has many beneficial purposes, including:

- Improving staff efficiency and effectiveness and providing greater flexibility to meet the changing needs of business and services offered by the Commission.
- Providing an environment conducive to retaining quality staff and making the Commission an employer of choice for new talent.
- Offering staff an opportunity to minimize commute time while maintaining and/or increasing the organization's productivity and effectiveness.
- Helping staff and supervisors better balance the challenges of increased work demands and personal life while focusing on the organization's business requirements.
- Supporting regional efforts to improve air quality through the reduction of automotive cold starts and highway congestion.

Telework may be permitted part-time whereby employees telework for part of the workday, or for one or more days during the work week. The arrangement can be approved on an ongoing-basis (for example, one day every week), or on a project-basis, as determined by the supervisor.

Salary, benefits, and job responsibilities do not change as a result of teleworking. Employees must continue working their standard work week hours and arrange telework hours to assure they are accessible during core work hours established by their department.

Telework should be transparent or seamless to constituents and colleagues. Constituents and colleagues must receive the same, or better, quality of services from teleworkers.

Managers may decide not to make telework available to an employee or may terminate the telework arrangement with notice if it is not meeting business needs and established expectations.

Telework is not a substitute for dependent care.

Employees approved for a telework schedule will sign an agreement documenting the terms of the *Telework Agreement* (see Appendix B).

ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES:

Merit system employees who have worked for the Commission for at least one year are eligible to apply for telework. Department Heads also may choose to extend telework to contract employees.

Telework is a cooperative arrangement between the employee and his/her department. The arrangement is voluntary and its approval is based on a review of the departmental work program, the employee's job duties and performance level, as well as the proposed alternate work site. Some positions within the Commission are not appropriate for telework. Final determinations of the appropriateness for work units, positions, and employees to participate in telework are made by the Department Head. The Work/Life Program provides employees the opportunity to request telework on a voluntary basis. However, this program does not preclude management's right to offer or assign telework as an alternate work arrangement option.

DEFINITIONS:

Alternate Work sites- A designated work place within the employee's home or Commission facility different from the employee's regular work site. Alternate work sites must be approved by the Commission as acceptable for telework.

Core Hours- The portion of a standard workday when all full-time employees must be accessible. Core hours are determined by the Department Head and may vary during peak and seasonal periods.

Pay Period- The time period for which employees are paid on a biweekly basis.

Standard Work week- A standard work week for full-time employees is 40 hours.

Traditional Work Place- The employee's regular work site.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Employee is responsible for:

Administrative Actions/Duties

- Initiating a request for telework through completion of the *Telework Screening Survey* (Appendix A) and *Telework Agreement* (Appendix B). The employee must submit both forms to his/her supervisor.
- Attending required training before beginning telework.
- Ensuring compliance with additional policies and/or guidelines addressed in the telework training session.
- Securing supervisory approval to take any necessary confidential material to the telework location. If using a computer, securing departmental approval to log into the office from a remote-site

computer. All work products produced at the off-site location remain the property of the Commission. Employees shall maintain the integrity of confidential work materials and assignments, including, but not limited to, any technological security measures.

- Maintaining telework hours approved by the supervisor. Overtime while teleworking is strongly discouraged. The employee must receive approval from his/her department before working overtime hours in a telework situation.
- Complying with departmental procedures for recording time worked.
- Being readily available to the supervisor, co-workers, and customers during telework hours. The employee's work site phone number and telework hours must be available to appropriate staff members as determined by the supervisor.
- Adjusting the telework schedule to attend meetings as needed.
- Responding to telephone messages or calls during telework hours.
- Ensuring that meetings are not conducted at the employee's home.
- Making sure that telework hours are not being used to care for dependents or entertain guests.

Telework Costs

The need for telework equipment and supplies is determined on a case-by-case basis and may range from a phone, paper, and pencil, to a computer.

Commission-provided equipment is not an entitlement of telework. The Commission may, at its sole discretion, choose to lend available equipment and supplies when justified by the nature of the employee's work and the needs of the department. Use of equipment and supplies requires the approval of the Department Head. Once approved, the equipment is for use only by the employee. If Commission equipment, such as computers, printers, and software, are provided for use, the department will keep records of the equipment's serial number/identification when the employee takes possession. The employee remains responsible for:

- Covering all costs associated with setting up a workspace in the home. Employees must provide a work table, chair, telephone, and any other equipment and supplies needed to perform their work. Employees are also responsible for costs of utilities (e.g., gas, electricity, telephone and modem lines, etc.).
- Purchasing, installing, and maintaining employee-owned computers, modems, software.
- Installing and maintaining any Commission-loaned equipment and supplies while they are in the employee's possession, and covering all charges related to replacement of loaned items if lost, stolen, or damaged beyond repair.
- Paying expenses associated with traveling to and from the telework location.

- Submitting to the Commission for reimbursement the cost of work-related phone calls.

Safety

- Complying with telework safety standards and maintaining a work place free of safety hazards. The employee must attend a training session that will cover safety issues before beginning the telework arrangement.
- For reasons related to the Commission's Workers' Compensation liability, providing a photograph of the telework workspace (including work table, chair, lighting, and window placement) for review by the Risk Management Office, Department of Human Resources and Management (DHRM). In an exceptional case, an on-site assessment of the work space may be required prior to final approval of the telework arrangement. The Risk Management Office will arrange the visit with the employee during regular office hours. The employee will be provided reasonable advance notice and given the opportunity to request that his/her supervisor also be present during the on-site inspection. On-site inspections will be required in the event of any worker's compensation claim.
- Notifying the supervisor immediately if injured while teleworking, and following established Commission procedures for reporting on-the-job injuries. **Workers Compensation covers the employee only while working at the designated work area at the alternate work site during designated working hours and in the performance of Commission related work. It does not cover, for example, an injury that occurs while the employee is making lunch in the kitchen or walking up and down stairs.**
- Providing evidence of homeowner/renter insurance. Employees must have minimum home-office liability coverage in the amount of \$300,000. Employees should note that some homeowner/renter policies do not automatically cover injuries arising out of, or relating to, the business use of the home. For the employee's protection, employees should have their homeowner/renter liability policy endorsed to cover bodily injury and property damage to all third parties arising out of or relating to the business use of their home.
- Notifying and gaining the approval of the Risk Management Office when there is a change in the location of the telework location.

Supervisor is responsible for:

- Reviewing telework requests and providing to the Department Head recommendations for approval or denial.
- Determining the effective date of the *Telework Agreement*.
- Discussing with employees the method for communicating and assessing performance expectations during telework.

- Ensuring that telework does not result in non-exempt employees working more than 40 hours in a work week consistent with the Commission policy on overtime.
- Ensuring that software-licensing requirements are being followed when the employee is accessing or using Commission software from a remote computer; monitoring any Commission equipment lent to employees.
- Ensuring that the telework arrangement is not being mis-used and is conducive to the work program. Supervisors will have the discretion to periodically review the telework arrangement.

Department Head is responsible for:

- Reviewing and approving requests for telework. When a supervisor has denied a request, the Department Head will review the request and the supervisor's reason for denial. The Department Head may approve or disapprove an employee's request, and notify the supervisor and the employee of the decision in writing.
- Approving the use of Commission equipment and supplies for telework.
- Providing an annual report of the telework program to the Executive Director.
- Identifying any departmental units or positions not appropriate for telework.

Department of Human Resources & Management is responsible for:

- Reviewing the photograph of the designated work space at the telework location, and approving, denying, or making recommendations for improvement. The Risk Management Office may request an on-site assessment of the proposed telework location when it is difficult to determine from the photograph whether the work site meets safety guidelines for telework.
- Coordinating the mandatory training for new teleworkers.

PROCEDURES:

1. The **employee** reviews the Telework Administrative Procedures and submits to his/her supervisor the completed *Telework Screening Survey* (Appendix A) and *Telework Agreement* (Appendix B).
2. The **supervisor** meets with the employee to review the *Telework Screening Survey* and the *Telework Agreement*. The supervisor reviews the employee's request to ensure that:
 - Operational requirements for the department continue to be met; the department provides the same, or better level of service to its customers.

- The employee's position is suitable for telework based on a review of the *Telework Screening Survey*.
- The employee has a satisfactory performance and attendance record.
- The telework arrangement does not diminish the ability of the department to assign future responsibilities related to the employee's official duties.
- The approval of the employee's request does not compromise work results in instances where other employees in the unit have already been approved to telework.

Note: See Appendix C – *Screening Guidelines for Supervisors*

Based on the review, the supervisor recommends approval or denial of the employee's request and forwards the signed *Telework Agreement* and the *Telework Screening Survey* to the Department Head. If denial is recommended, the supervisor must forward to the Department Head the basis for denial along with the employee's request.

3. The **Department Head** reviews the telework forms, and approves or disapproves the employee's request. In all cases, the Department Head's decision is final and is not grievable.
4. If the **Department Head** approves the request, the *Telework Agreement* is forwarded to the Risk Management Office, DHRM, for review of the telework location. A photograph of the work space must accompany the telework forms.
5. **Risk Management Office, Department of Human Resources and Management** reviews the photograph of the designated work space at the telework location, and approves, denies, or makes recommendations for improvement. Risk Management may request an on-site assessment of the proposed telework location when it is difficult to determine from the photograph whether the work site meets safety guidelines for telework.

If the telework location is approved, the employee is scheduled for a mandatory telework training session. The Risk Management Office will sign the *Telework Agreement* upon completion of the training. A copy of the *Agreement* is returned to the department to enable telework to begin at the time determined by the employee and his/her supervisor.

6. **Changes to Telework Schedules:** An employee may terminate or propose a modification to the *Telework Agreement* with written notification to, and approval by the supervisor. Written notification requires at least five (5) workdays.

The supervisor may require the employee, with written notice, to terminate or modify the *Telework Agreement* if service and operating requirements of the work unit are not being met. Written notification requires at least five (5) workdays. A supervisor also may make temporary changes to the telework arrangement to maintain the effectiveness of the employee's work unit. Temporary changes may be made without prior written notification.

Attachments:

- Appendix A: Telework Screening Survey
- Appendix B: Telework Agreement
- Appendix C: Screening Guidelines for Supervisors

TELEWORK SCREENING SURVEY

** To Be Completed By Telework Applicant*

This survey assists supervisors and Department Heads in deciding whether individual jobs are conducive to telework. To apply for telework, employees must complete and submit this form, along with a completed *Telework Agreement*, to their supervisor. Supervisors may refer to the Supervisory Screening Guidelines when evaluating the information provided by the employee in this *Survey* and the *Telework Agreement*.

Employee Name _____ Department/Division _____

Position Title _____ Work Telephone _____

1. Explain the type of work you will be doing while teleworking.

2. Describe how telework will benefit the work unit and the employee.

3. Indicate the types of tasks you will perform while teleworking with the approximate percentage of time that you will perform each task.

<input type="checkbox"/> Writing/Typing	<input type="checkbox"/> Word Processing	<input type="checkbox"/> Data Management
<input type="checkbox"/> Computer Programming	<input type="checkbox"/> Administrative	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone work
<input type="checkbox"/> Field Visits	<input type="checkbox"/> Reviewing staff work	<input type="checkbox"/> Research
<input type="checkbox"/> Sending electronic mail		

Please specify any areas relevant to your proposed telework program not covered above:

TELEWORK SCREENING SURVEY CONTINUED

4. The following chart assists in the assessment of how well your job/position characteristics relate to telework. Please indicate how often and the percentage of your responsibilities which involve the following characteristics:

Assessment of Job Characteristics

Job Characteristics	On a Daily Basis	On a Weekly Basis
Responsible for in-person contact with employees and customers		
Ease of scheduling required meetings into predetermined times		
Amount of work which must be coordinated with other co-workers/team members		
Degree job permits you to control your work flow		
Degree job requires you to use materials/equipment only available on site		
Degree job allows independent thinking -vs- required supervision Degree of supervisory responsibilities, if applicable		

5. What kind of equipment and supplies are necessary to complete your telework? Please list and indicate if they are available at your telework location.
6. Provide any additional information that you feel is beneficial to your supervisor(s) in determining whether the telework arrangement is agreeable.

TELEWORK AGREEMENT

** To Be Completed By Telework Applicant, Management, and Risk Management Office.*

This application is required to initiate a request for telework. Once approved by the employee's supervisor, Department, and the Risk Management Office/DHRM, the employee may telework as specified below:

Proposed Schedule:

A. To be completed by the Department Head or designee before employee completes Part B.

- The employee must work _____ number of hours during his/her pay period.
- The core hours for the unit are _____ to _____.
- The length of the lunch period is _____.

B. To be completed by the employee:

- I am requesting the following work schedule which meets all hours specified above: _____ work hours at the traditional location **and** _____ work hours at the telework location.
- My telework schedule is being proposed on: an ongoing-basis _____ **or** on a project-basis _____. If the schedule is being submitted on a project basis, provide the name and approximate duration of the project: _____.
- The complete address of my telework location is: _____.
- The phone number at my telework location is _____.
- My usual round-trip mileage to and from the traditional work site each day is _____. This information will be used to assess the Commission's contribution to the preservation of the environment.

	-----Week 1-----					-----Week 2-----				
	Start	Lunch		End	Work Hours	Start	Lunch		End	Work Hours
		From	To				From	To		
Sunday*										
Monday*										
Tuesday*										
Wednesday*										
Thursday*										
Friday*										
Saturday*										
	Total Work Hours					Total Work Hours				

*When completing the chart, insert a "T" for those hours/days during which you will be teleworking.

TELEWORK AGREEMENT CONTINUED

Termination And Change Provisions for Telework :

Modification or Termination of the *Telework Agreement*: The employee or supervisor may propose to modify or terminate the *Telework Agreement* with written notice of at least five (5) workdays. The employee's notice to modify or terminate the *Telework Agreement* must be approved by his/her supervisor.

Temporary Changes to the Telework Schedule: The supervisor may temporarily change the telework schedule to maintain the effectiveness of the employee's work unit. Prior written notification is not required.

Signatures:

Employee

- I have reviewed and understand my responsibilities as outlined in the Administrative Procedures for Telework and this Agreement; **and**
- I have attached a copy of the *Telework Screening Survey*, my homeowner/renter insurance information, and a photograph of the telework work space (including chair, worktable, lighting, and window placement). Risk Management Office/DHRM will review the proposed work site after the Department Head has approved my request; **and**
- I understand that the telework arrangement may only commence after my Department has received notice from the Risk Management Office that the telework location is approved and that I have completed necessary telework training.
- I understand that management may periodically review my *Telework Agreement* and make modifications or terminate this *Telework Agreement* if necessary.
- I understand that I am responsible for disclosing any secondary employment as consideration for approval or continuance of the telework arrangement. I also will not participate in secondary employment activities during my agreed upon telework schedule work hours.
- I have read and understand the following indemnification provisions:

I, _____ shall indemnify and hold harmless The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission ("Commission") from and against all legal actions, liabilities, claims, or suits of any kind which may be brought or made against the Commission and for which it must incur and pay any damages, legal costs, or other expenses of any kind, as a result of my negligence under this *Telework Agreement*.

I understand that the telework policy expressly prohibits meetings or gatherings during telework hours at non-Commission work sites. I am responsible for all damages resulting from any non-work related injury that I sustain. I am also responsible for any injury sustained by a third-party within the work space, either during or outside of telework hours. I further indemnify and hold harmless the Commission against all legal action for these injuries, as stated in the prior paragraph.

I further understand that if I am injured in my work space during non-telework hours, or sustain a non-work related injury during telework hours, the Commission has no liability for this incident, and I waive all claims against the Commission for such injury.

Employee Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Please forward signed request to your supervisor

TELEWORK AGREEMENT CONTINUED

Supervisor

- Recommend **Approval** of employee's request; **or**
- Recommend **Denial** of employee's request. Reasons for denial/recommendations for modifications include:

Supervisor Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Please forward signed request to the Department Head.

Department Head

- Approve** employee's request for telework; **or**
- Approve** employee's request for **telework with the following modifications:**

_____ **or**
- Deny** employee's request for telework.

Department Head Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Please forward approved requests to the Risk Management Office/DHRM.

Risk Management

- Approve** the proposed telework location; **or**
- Deny** the proposed telework location. **Recommended modifications include:**

Risk Management Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Risk Management must forward a copy of this Agreement to the employee's supervisor.

TELEWORK AGREEMENT CONTINUED**Effective Date of Agreement:**

Once the Risk Management Office approves the telework location and the employee completes necessary training, telework may begin at the time agreed upon by the employee and his/her supervisor.

The date on which this *Telework Agreement* takes effect is _____.

(Completed by employee's supervisor.)

This Agreement is not an employment contract. The terms and conditions of employment are governed by all applicable laws and established Commission policies, this Agreement notwithstanding. If any conflict exists between this document and any laws or Commission policies, the laws and Commission policies shall govern.

Distribution of Completed Agreements

Original Agreement: Department file

Copies of signed Agreement: Employee

Supervisor

Telework Program c/o Employee/Labor Relations Team/DHRM at EOB

SCREENING GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISORS

Together, with the responses provided in the *Telework Survey* and the *Telework Agreement*, this outline is designed to help supervisors evaluate whether a proposed telework arrangement is well advised.

Introduction

There are three main elements to a telework application:

1. The elements of the job to be performed while teleworking;
2. The characteristics and habits of the person who seeks to telework; and
3. The supervisor's management style.

Job Considerations

Jobs with the following characteristics are well suited for telework:

- Little need for face-to-face communication with other employees, supervisors, or the public (communication can be handled over the telephone, voice mail, or electronic mail).
- The job includes tasks that can be done alone, such as writing, reading, telephoning, planning, computer programming, word processing, and data entry.
- The telework tasks include clearly defined assignments and work products.
- The tasks include identifiable time frames and performance measures.

Employee Considerations

The best teleworkers are strong performers with a thorough knowledge of the job, are self-disciplined, highly motivated, and comfortable working alone. Employees who require constant direction and supervision may make poor teleworkers. Telework is generally not for a marginal employee or a new employee just learning his/her job. Telework is not appropriate while an employee is on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP).

Teleworkers should have the following characteristics:

- A proven ability to perform.
- Thorough substantive knowledge of the job.
- A self-motivated, self-disciplined, self-directed personality.
- A desire to make telework effective.
- Above-average skills in planning, organizing, managing time, and meeting clear standards and objectives.

SCREENING GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISORS CONTINUED**Supervisor Considerations**

The supervisor's role also is critical to the telework arrangement. As with the teleworker, there are traits that help make telework successful. They include:

- An open, positive attitude toward telework.
- Trust in and respect for the teleworker to work independently to fully complete and excel with assigned tasks.
- Above average organizational and planning skills.
- The ability to establish clear objectives and measurements.
- Ability to provide regular feedback to the teleworker (open communication).

If the teleworker is out of the office more than one day a week, schedule regular communication, including face-to-face meetings, with the teleworker to assess needs, give feedback, discuss problems, and catch up. By doing this you will not feel as if you are losing contact, and the teleworker will be less isolated. When face-to-face meetings are not possible, utilize other means, such as e-mail and the phone, to keep the lines of communication open.

The most successful prototype programs have the teleworker working remotely one or two days a week. Very few individuals can successfully stay at home five days a week. Complete isolation from the office has inherent drawbacks that should be avoided.