



Guidance for Teleworking

This resource is intended to help navigate and establish successful telework arrangements.

1. What is teleworking, and how does it differ from other forms of remote work? Telework is a work arrangement in which some or all of the work is performed from home or another off-site location. In general, regular office hours are worked and deviations from that schedule require supervisor approval. Currently employees should be working 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., unless otherwise determined and/or approved by your supervisor.

2. What is most important to starting a productive teleworking arrangement? Supervisors should articulate clear procedures regarding check-in times and job-related expectations.

Supervisor Checklist for Supporting Teleworking

The following checklist will help you establish a foundation for effective teamwork, and continued productivity:

1. Review technology needs and resources.

Identify technology tools staff use in their daily work and determine whether the resources will be accessible when working from home. Also, ensure employees know how to access the appropriate technical support should they need assistance.

- a. Confirm that employees know how to access their voicemail, emails, Skype, relevant systems, and files from home.
- b. Determine which platform(s) you will use to communicate as a team, clarify expectations for online availability, and confirm everyone has access to the technology tool(s) and support resources.

2. Review work schedules.

Telework can be confused with flex work. Be clear about your expectations with employees for maintaining their current work schedule or if you are open to flexible scheduling based on employee needs.

3. Draft a work plan.

Review the questions below with employees and work through answers together.

- a. What routine responsibilities/tasks cannot be fulfilled while working remotely and how will it impact operations or other people? What are ways to reduce the impacts?
- b. What routine responsibilities/tasks require regular communication and collaboration with others? Proactively contact each other to confirm how you will communicate while working remotely.

c. Often times, employees experience fewer interruptions while teleworking. Are there any special projects or tasks that you can advance while working remotely?

d. What events or meetings are scheduled during the time in which the temporary telework arrangement is in place? Will they be postponed or canceled, or will they take place using technology? What follow-up needs to occur due to postponements or cancellations?

4. Make a communication and accountability plan.

Supervisors should have daily communication with each of their employees during this time. Communicate to discuss work expectations, report on progress, and express any concerns or needs.

a. Employees should be available by phone and email during the agreed upon hours.

b. Respond to all emails and voicemails in a timely manner. If you are not able to provide an answer within one business day, you must respond to each email indicating that you have received the message and that you will respond fully in a timely manner.

c. If you need team meetings, please use Skype for Business or other designated resources for conference calling.

d. Discuss daily goals and assignments to be completed. Remember that although your employees are working from home, any time sensitive tasks **MUST** still be completed by designated deadlines.

e. Confirm any needs for coming to campus during this time.

f. Set expectations of when assignments should be completed.

5. Be positive.

A positive attitude toward teleworking and a willingness to trust employees to telework effectively is key to making such arrangements successful and productive. Teleworking presents an opportunity for managers to become better supervisors. Instead of focusing on how many hours your employees are working, re-emphasize a focus on measuring results and reaching objectives—regardless of work arrangement. The employee's completed work product is the indicator of success, rather than direct observation. By focusing on the employee's work product, managers and supervisors will improve their organizational abilities and their own skill in managing by objectives.

6. Debrief after normal operations resume.

Employees and supervisors should review work plans when work returns to normal, assess progress on the employee's work plan, and prioritize any unresolved or new work that resulted from temporary operational disruption.

Teleworking Guidance for Employees

Employees who telework often learn that working remotely is different than they expected and that it requires specific skills and habits. The employee is responsible for maintaining a safe and secure work environment. Please review the following carefully:

1. Define your workspace.

Experienced teleworkers will tell you that it is often difficult to stay focused at home. We are creatures of habit and most of us are used to our normal home routines. Establishing a workspace, even if it is your kitchen table, gives your brain a cue that it is time for work. Wearing attire that you may wear to the office even if it is your “casual Friday” attire may cue the brain. You should remain capable of reporting to work if your presence is requested by your supervisor.

2. Master the basics.

- a. Learn how to access your voicemail, email, relevant systems, and files from home.
- b. Plan for possible conference calls and make sure you know how to join. Ensure that when you are on a call that you can be in a quiet area, free of distractions.

3. Set daily goals, track them and share your progress.

You may be surprised by how differently the workday passes without the comings and goings of an office to break things up or influence what you do next. Start each day of telework by writing down what you need to achieve and then track your progress. Pay attention to how long tasks take you and start adjusting your daily goals to match your current rhythm. Communicate with your supervisor if you think your telework plan needs to be adjusted.

4. Eliminate distractions.

Home can mean pets, children or a favorite hobby are only a few feet away. Depending on your living arrangement, you may need to hang a “do not disturb” sign so you are not interrupted. Pets often need a closed door to keep them away, and you might need headphones to block the noise.

5. Prioritize privacy.

Whether you are in your home or a common area, take five minutes to assess the privacy of your workspace. Can someone standing behind you read your computer screen? Are your windows open so your neighbor can hear your phone call? What information do you need to secure before grabbing a cup of coffee or heading to the restroom? Your personal privacy matters too, so see if there is anything around you that you would not want visible during a video conference.

6. Continue to employ security best practices.

- a. VPNs allow you to safely connect to a remote network as if you are there.
- b. You are expected to observe all security procedures and policies.
- c. If you have experienced a security incident, report the incident directly to IT.

d. Situations like this are prime phishing opportunities. Remain vigilant for security concerns and be sure to report suspicious emails.

7. Time Reporting

a. Bi-weekly Employees should log telework hours with time reporting code 00TWH-Teleworking Non-Exempt, these hours will process at your normal rate of pay. Telework reporting code should only be used for actual hours worked from an alternate location. Any hours worked on campus should be logged with time reporting code – 00REG-Regular. Vacation and Sick Leave should be reported as usual.

b. Monthly Employees should report time and/or leave as usual.

8. Stay connected.

Many people say they do not call or instant message colleagues who are working remotely because they don't want to bother them. Remember, they are working, not vacationing at home! You should feel confident about calling or messaging an employee who is teleworking anytime you would walk to their office or call them if you were working on-site.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Technology Services Resources

A variety of resources are available to you through Information Technology. Search for assistance on the GSC website: gordonstate.edu/departments/computer-services/. Or send questions to helpstar@gordonstate.edu for guidance.