



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES Human Resources Policy #111

TELEWORK GUIDELINES

The Telework Policy and Telework Guidelines must be reviewed prior to applying for or approving telework. The conditions listed below apply to all teleworkers.

1. EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION

Telework is approved at management's discretion. It is not an employee right. Telework is a work arrangement between an employee and their supervisor. An employee's participation in telework is usually voluntary. The employee, their supervisor, or an authorized official may terminate telework at any time. Issues regarding telework are not appealable, grievable or subject to review.

Teleworking employees' conditions of employment remain the same as for non-teleworking employees. The employee is covered by and will adhere to all policies, rules, and regulations of the department and state while teleworking. The teleworker agrees not to conduct personal business while teleworking.

2. TELEWORK SELF-ASSESSMENT

Employees applying for telework must complete and submit the **Telework Self-Assessment** (Attachment # 2) to determine, if telework is suitable for their position and work style. The official copy is maintained by the supervisor. A copy must also be sent to the Agency Telework Coordinator.

3. TELEWORK WORKSPACE SELF-CERTIFICATION

Employees must verify their telework site is safe and suitable by completing the **Telework Workspace Self-Certification** (Attachment #3). If it is not, telework may be denied. The official copy is maintained by the supervisor. A copy must also be sent to the Agency Telework Coordinator.

4. TELEWORK APPLICATION

Employees applying for telework must submit the **Telework Self-Assessment** (Attachment #2), the **Telework Workspace Self-Certification** (Attachment #3), and the **Telework Application** (Attachment #4) to their supervisor for approval and signature. The supervisor has **five (5) business days** from the date of submission to approve or

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deny the Telework Application. The official copy is maintained by the supervisor. A copy must also be sent to the Agency Telework Coordinator.

5. TELEWORK AGREEMENT

The **Telework Agreement** (Attachment #5) must be completed and signed by the employee and their supervisor prior to the start of telework. The agreement must be reviewed whenever there is a major job change (such as a promotion), or whenever the teleworker or their supervisor changes position. The official copy is maintained by the supervisor. A copy must also be sent to the Agency Telework Coordinator.

Employees must also agree to participate in studies, inquiries, reports, or analysis relating to telework at the Agency Telework Coordinator's direction.

6. EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

Office supplies (e.g. pens and paper) will be provided by the department and should be obtained during the teleworker's in-office work period. DHS will not reimburse teleworkers for out-of-pocket expenses for supplies normally available in the office. DHS may also give written permission for certain equipment (e.g. laptops, printers, etc.) to be checked out and used at the alternate worksite. As department equipment is the property of the state, the department must retain the responsibility for the inventory and maintenance of state-owned property following state laws and procedures.

The employee is expected to use their own furniture, telephone lines, etc. Any use of private facilities by the employee will be at the employee's discretion and not at the direction or expense of the department. This applies to all physical improvements and conveniences, as well as services.

Employees are responsible for ensuring that all department issued equipment is maintained in a safe and secure manner. Equipment must be connected to a grounded electrical outlet and into a surge protector. All state-owned equipment, material and/or other property will be immediately returned upon request, termination of telework and/or termination of employment. Employees are not authorized to use department issued equipment for personal use. Employees taking equipment and/or supplies to and from the telework site will be responsible for completing the Telework Property Removal Form (Attachment #6). This is a detailed list of all equipment in the employee's possession. The official copy is maintained by the supervisor. A copy must also be sent to the Agency Telework Coordinator.

7. WORKSPACE AND WORK HOURS

A designated workspace and designated work hours are necessary to: (1) reduce the state's exposure to risk, (2) facilitate proper management of teleworkers and (3) ensure work is done in a safe environment.

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The employee will maintain a clean and safe workspace that is adequate for work and free of obstructions and distractions. To ensure that productive working conditions exist, it may be necessary to make on-site visits at mutually agreed upon times. However, this will be handled by the department on a case-by-case basis. The teleworker must designate a specific workspace at the telework site and will conduct work for the department from that location.

If the teleworker changes their telework site, they must complete a new **Telework Workspace Self-Certification** (Attachment #3) and submit it to their supervisor for review and approval. This must also be forwarded to the Agency Telework Coordinator.

Teleworkers must develop a work schedule with their supervisor and the supervisor must agree in advance to any changes to the employee's schedule. FLSA non-exempt employees must obtain approval from their supervisor before performing overtime work. Teleworking privileges may be terminated for a FLSA non-exempt employee working overtime without approval. Teleworkers must obtain management/supervisory approval prior to taking leave during a designated telework day.

The employee must maintain contact with the office during their agreed upon work schedule, per the Telework Policy and the Telework Agreement.

An employee's activities outside their designated telework hours or outside their designated workspace for telework will be deemed to be in the employee's own personal time and place, which is unconnected with work activities.

8. EXPENSES AND COMPENSABLE TIME

An employee may work from their home or another alternate worksite that has been approved by the department. Mileage between the home and the employee's telework site is considered commute mileage and not subject to reimbursement.

Work-related long-distance phone calls should be planned for in-office days. At the discretion of the supervisor, expenses for work-related long-distance calls may be reimbursed, if the reasons and costs for the calls are documented. The teleworker is responsible for the cost of maintenance, repair and operation of personal equipment not provided by the state.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SECURITY

The employee is responsible for maintaining confidentiality and security at the telework site, as the employee would at the primary workplace. The employee must protect the security and integrity of data, information, files, and access to departmental computer systems. Any compromise of data, records or other information must be immediately reported to the employee's supervisor, IT, and the Agency Telework Coordinator.

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10. DEPENDENT CARE

Telework is not a substitute for dependent care. The teleworker shall continue to arrange dependent care to the same extent, as if they were in the conventional office. Teleworkers will manage dependent care in a way that allows them to successfully fulfill their work responsibilities.

11. LIABILITY

The employee's telework site, when used during scheduled telework is an extension of their DHS workspace. The state's liability for job-related accidents will continue to exist during the approved work schedule and in the employee's designated workspace. The teleworker is covered under the State Workers' Compensation Law for injuries occurring during the actual performance of official duties at the alternate worksite during the designated work hours. Please note, attending to personal comfort needs is not considered performing official duties.

If an injury occurs during telework hours, then the employee will immediately report the injury to their supervisor. The employee and their supervisor should follow the state's policies regarding the reporting of injuries for employees injured at work.

The State of Georgia is not responsible for any injuries to family members, visitors, and others in the employee's telework site. The teleworker may not have business guests at the alternate worksite or any other location except the departmental offices.

The teleworker is responsible for contacting the teleworker's insurance agent, a tax advisor, and consulting local ordinances for information regarding home workplaces, including neighborhood association guidelines (e.g. community/subdivision covenants).

Employees are responsible for maintaining a safe and secure work environment at their telework site. Employees' telework site may be subject to inspection to ensure proper safety. Employees are required to immediately notify their supervisor, as conditions change.

12. COMPLIANCE WITH FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT (FLSA)

Managers/supervisors must ensure that all telework employees adhere to designated work schedules. Non-exempt employees must comply with all provisions of the FLSA. Non-exempt employees are required to maintain accurate timesheets when teleworking. Please reference, DHS Human Resources Policy #1001, for additional information on FLSA.

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13. TRAINING

Managers/supervisors and employees must complete the online telework training through LMS or IOTIS prior to the employee's commencement of telework. The certificates of completion must be sent to the Agency Telework Coordinator.

14. EXPECTATIONS FOR MONITORING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Jobs suitable for telework are characterized by clearly defined results. Since teleworker performance is measured by results rather than presence at the main work site, it is critical to ensure that performance expectations are clearly defined so that a proper evaluation can be conducted at designated intervals.