

STATE OF MARYLAND

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AGENCY TELEWORKING IMPLEMENTATION MANUAL

DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT

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AGENCY TELEWORKING IMPLEMENTATION MANUAL

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Attachments:

1. Suggestions for Setting-up the Home Office
2. Agency Teleworking Agreement
3. Remote Workplace Self-Certification Checklist
4. Teleworker Work Plan

MANUAL USER OBJECTIVES

This manual is intended to assist agencies in setting up an agency teleworking program. Agencies that already have established teleworking programs should not re-create their programs.

The primary user of this manual will be the Agency Teleworking Coordinator.

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 managers. 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 136 (2013 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 the Agency Teleworking Coordinator.

The manual is designed to provide answers to 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 15% 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

SUBJECT: Teleworking

Effective: 7/1/99

Revised: 5/22/13

OPSB Executive Director

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 15% 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, the Remote Workplace Self-Certification Checklist and the General Telework Requirements before teleworking and annually when the teleworking arrangement continues beyond 12 months.

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 - SETTING-UP THE AGENCY PROGRAM

The following information is intended to assist agencies in setting up an agency teleworking program. Agencies that already have established teleworking programs should not re-create their programs. However, these agencies should ensure that the essential elements described below are in place.

STEP 1: Identify an Agency Teleworking Coordinator

This step is for the executive staff of each agency. An Agency Teleworking Coordinator should be appointed to oversee the implementation of the telework program within each agency. The Coordinator should be responsible for following the steps listed below in addition to:

- ◆ utilizing this policy to implement the agency program;
- ◆ promoting the program to agency supervisors;
- ◆ providing training to employees and supervisors as required;
- ◆ answering employees' and supervisors' questions related to teleworking;
- ◆ representing the agency on the Statewide Telework Steering Committee;
- ◆ developing agency policies regarding the provision of equipment to teleworkers; and
- ◆ ensuring that the agency meets its teleworking participation goal.

The name of the Agency Teleworking Coordinator should be faxed to Ms. Sheryl Hagood, Statewide Teleworking Coordinator, at 410-333-5262.

STEP 2: Identify Suitable Classifications for Teleworking

Although the Statewide Telework Steering Committee will be identifying eligible participants in each agency, the Agency Teleworking Coordinator will be responsible for assessing the classifications and job duties of the various agency classifications. This information should be brought to the meetings of the Steering Committee for discussions with other agencies. However in no case, should an agency wait for direction from the Steering Committee before implementing the program or before allowing employees to telework. Agencies will ultimately be responsible for determining which classifications within the agency are best suited for teleworking.

Classifications **suitable** for teleworking are often analytical, telephone-intensive, or computer-oriented in nature. Examples of work suitable for teleworking are: data analysis, reviewing grants/cases, writing decisions/reports; setting up conferences, obtaining information, following up on participants in a study; data entry, and word processing.

Classifications **not suitable** for teleworking often require the employee to have extensive face-to-face contact with the supervisor, other employees, clients, or the general public; require access to material which cannot be moved from the main office; require special facilities/equipment; or have costly security considerations.

Although classifications may be identified as suitable for teleworking, not every position in the classification may be equally well-suited. Therefore, a little later in the process you will need to assist supervisors to actually identify positions and then employees suitable for teleworking.

STEP 3: Educate Supervisors about Teleworking

A vital step in this process is ensuring that supervisors who oversee employees in classifications suitable for teleworking are informed of the program and knowledgeable about the policies related to the program. This process can be accomplished through either training or information distribution, whichever best suits the agency. Supervisors should be provided with a copy of the Supervisor's Teleworking Manual.

Supervisors should be made aware of the special supervisory characteristics that facilitate the success of the telecommuting program. Supervisors are half of the teleworking team. Beyond assisting the teleworker with work plans, supervisors play a vital role in facilitating discussions with co-workers and in solving problems. Supervisors who find it difficult to supervise employees in the office may find it difficult to supervise teleworkers.

A successful Telesupervisor:

- has a results oriented management style;
- has a flexible management approach;
- trusts employees;
- keeps an open, positive attitude toward teleworking;
- tries to accommodate teleworking schedules;
- delegates work easily;
- is well organized;
- provides timely and constructive feedback; and
- facilitates open communication.

However, supervisors who do not have these skills should not be precluded from allowing their employees to telework. This simply means that these supervisors may have to make adjustments to their management style.

STEP 4: Determine Agency Policy Regarding Equipment

A successful teleworking program does not require that an agency provide employees with any specialized equipment (i.e. laptops, computers, faxes, or modems). The State has many positions that do not require specialized equipment. These employees may be reviewing applications, analyzing data, proofreading documents, or simply making telephone calls.

The Agency Teleworking Coordinator should work with the agency executive management to determine what, if any, equipment would be provided to teleworkers. Agency equipment options include:

- ◆ providing no equipment to teleworkers;
- ◆ allowing each work unit to loan extra equipment to teleworkers on teleworking days;
- ◆ loaning teleworkers equipment for the duration of the telework period;
- ◆ providing incentives for teleworkers to purchase their own equipment;
- ◆ subsidizing the purchase of equipment by teleworkers; or
- ◆ purchasing equipment for teleworkers.

In the near future, DBM will coordinate a Statewide effort to assist employees with the purchase of computer equipment. However in the meantime, agencies may develop their own programs in order to meet the agencies' teleworking needs.

STEP 5: Be Familiar with Available Telework Centers

Teleworkers have three basic remote worksite options. These include the teleworker's home, another State facility, or a Telework Center.

The Maryland National Guard has several Telework Centers that are available for use by State employees. These centers are fully equipped offices. Resources include work space, computers, faxes, modems, and copy machines. See the complete list of Telework Centers.

The use of these centers does not cost the agency anything unless an employee uses the facility on a Monday or during evening hours. It is important that you provide your supervisors with information about the Telework Center so that they can adequately inform their teleworkers of remote site options.

If you would like more information about the Telework Centers, the Maryland National Guard Telework Center Help Desk Coordinator, at 410-702-9615.

STEP 6: Assist Supervisors in Identifying Suitable Positions for Teleworking

As noted before, 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).

In order to identify positions suitable for teleworking, the Agency Teleworking Coordinator should ensure that supervisors have a very clear understanding of teleworking and which types of job functions are best suited for teleworking.

STEP 7: Assist Supervisors in Identifying Suitable Employees for Teleworking

Once specific positions have been identified as suitable for teleworking, the Agency Teleworking Coordinator should ensure that supervisors understand the characteristics that make an employee a successful teleworker. Not all employees in positions identified as suitable for teleworking will be allowed to telework.

Employees allowed to 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 should have been at least "meets standards".

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.

STEP 8: Track Agency Participation

Because each agency has specific telework participation requirements, the Agency Telework Coordinator must keep track of the number of agency participants and their occurrences of teleworking. Remember, there is no specific requirement regarding the number of times an employee has to work from home in order to be considered a teleworker. An employee may telework on a weekly, bi-weekly, monthly or occasional basis

STEP 9: Evaluate the Program

Legislative reporting requirements mandate that each agency detail the success of the Teleworking program and the effect of the program on the agency. One of the obvious measures of program success will be an agency's participation level compared to the pre-determined participation goal of 10% of eligible employees. For the purposes of making an agency's telework goals, a teleworker is 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. However, it is recommended that agency's also track occasional teleworkers (individuals working at a remote worksite less than four times per month).

Other measures of success may include employee satisfaction, improved morale, increased productivity, more efficient use of office space, and supervisor satisfaction. Regardless of what measures an agency uses to determine the success of the program, the important point to remember is that an agency program must be evaluated.

STEP 10: Maintain Agency Support of the Program

It is essential that agencies maintain support of the teleworking program after the initial implementation. Teleworking is a flexible work place option that must be implemented.

Agency Telework Coordinators need to be aware of employees who drop out of the telework program. Agencies are expected to meet participation goals, and employees who drop out must be replaced with other eligible employees.

STEP 11: Continue Interaction with Supervisors

Agency supervisors are really the key to success for the teleworking program. If supervisors support the program, agencies are likely to meet their participation goals.

Therefore, Agency Telework Coordinators should pay particular attention to supervisors and ensure that they are fully informed about the program. The Coordinator should continue to provide support and assistance to supervisors even after the initial implementation of the program.

Supervisors will need to be reminded of the benefits of the program and of the agency's participation goals. In addition, supervisors will need to be reassured that they can, in fact, supervise an employee they can not see. Coordinators should make extensive use of the Supervisor's Teleworking Manual.

PART IV - SUPERVISOR AND TELEWORKER MANUALS

The Agency Teleworking Coordinator should be very familiar with the Supervisor and Teleworker Manuals. These two different manuals contain additional information not found in this manual.

It is important for the Coordinator to know the information in these manuals in order to answer questions from supervisors and teleworkers. In addition, the Coordinator should ensure that each supervisor or teleworker is provided with the appropriate manual.

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. It is highly recommended that supervisor's use the Teleworker Work Plan (Attachment 4) in order to plan the activities of the teleworker.

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 alternative worksite are affected by a widespread emergency, the agency should grant the teleworker an excused absence as appropriate. When an emergency affects only the alternative 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. Supervisors should make sure that teleworkers work overtime only with advance approval and should cancel teleworking privileges of employees who continue to 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.

The supervisor and the teleworker should agree on the days and times that the employee will work in each setting. The schedule can parallel those in the main office or be specific to the worksite. For example, a teleworker who works from 7:00 am to 3:30 pm at the main office, may be assigned the same schedule when working at home, a satellite office, or a Telework Center. Alternatively, the same teleworker 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 the employee's 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 employee and organizational 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 - 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 work week (generally on a regular basis) at remote worksites away from the main worksite. Typically, the remote worksite is the employee's home, satellite 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 which 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.

The supervisor and the teleworker must complete the Teleworker Work Plan (Attachment 4) 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.

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 an 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 a 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.