

Teleworking/Remote Working Tips for Supervisors

Telework works best when employees and supervisors communicate clearly about expectations. The following suggestions will help you establish a foundation for effective teamwork, continued productivity and service to the Iowa State community.

Set Expectations

It's important to communicate that the employee's appointment and job responsibilities have not changed, just the work location. Other items to clarify include:

- Expectations of how the work will be performed and delivered
- Work schedule and percentages of duties
- Requirement for the employee's participation or intermittent presence to the work site
- Who is responsible for the equipment required to perform duties
- Safety of the employee's home work environment
- Distractions in the employee's home work environment
- Periodic review of the telecommuting arrangement
- Either the employee or the supervisor may modify or discontinue the telecommuting arrangement based on the needs of the department.
- Identify email and phone contact expectations
- Continued requirement to disclose a Conflict of Interest-consulting or a conflict of time commitment
- Telecommuting is not intended to be used in place of sick time off, Family and Medical Leave (FMLA), Worker's Compensation leave, or other types of time off.
- Employees who are unable to work due to illness must use sick time off and must report their absence to their supervisor. Employees who wish to be relieved of responsibility for work on a particular day or days must use vacation time during their regular schedule.
- Employees are responsible for the safety and security of all university property and confidential information.
- Understand during this limited period, employees may be balancing sick family members and work. While telecommuting isn't a replacement for childcare, supervisors and employees should discuss the commitments and expectations of time off versus work.

Review Technology Needs and Resources

Identify technology tools staff use in their daily work and determine whether resources will be accessible when working remotely and ensure that employees know how to access technical support if they need assistance.

- Make sure employees know how to set up call forwarding and how to access voicemail from home.
- Determine which platforms and tools you will use to communicate as a team (Webex, Skype, telephone etc.), clarify expectations for online availability and confirm everyone has access to the technology tools and support resources. Information Technology Services offers additional [resources for employees](#) to assist with planning.

Draft a Work Plan

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

- What routine responsibilities cannot be fulfilled while working remotely and how will it impact operations or other people? What are ways to reduce the impacts?

- What routine responsibilities require regular communication and collaboration with others? Proactively contact each partner to confirm how you will communicate while everyone is working remotely.
- Employees often experience fewer interruptions while teleworking. Are there any special projects or tasks that you can advance while working remotely?
- 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 outreach needs to occur to support postponements or cancellations?

Make a Communication and Accountability Plan

Supervisors should tell employees how often they should check in or send updates on work plan progress, and what those updates should include. Supervisors should also communicate how quickly they expect employees to respond while teleworking and determine the best ways for the employee to contact the supervisor while working remotely.

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, reemphasize a focus on measuring results and reaching objectives. By focusing on the employee's work product, supervisors will improve their organizational abilities and their own skill in managing by objectives.