

Telework Program Policy

Policy on Telework, Version 4.0 (June 2022)

UPDATED BY THE NCPC TELEWORK MANAGING OFFICER

NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION | 401 Ninth Street, NW Suite 500 North Washington, DC

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I. Purpose

This policy provides a framework for the management, operation, and evaluation of the National Capital Planning Commission's (NCPC) telework program. NCPC recognizes that telework offers benefits for employees and for federal agencies, to include better recruitment and retention, increased productivity, improved emergency preparedness, reduced traffic congestion, and improved air quality.

II. Authority

This policy is issued under the authority of the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010, Public Law 111-292 (The Act). The Act requires each Executive agency to establish and implement a policy under which employees are authorized to telework. According to the Act, telework is not an employee or contractor benefit, nor is it an entitlement or an obligation. Telework is a management option for fulfilling a federal agency's work requirements in a method that can benefit the employee and the federal agency. Telework does not change the terms and conditions of employment.

III. Coverage

The NCPC's telework policy applies to all NCPC employees and contractors who meet the telework eligibility criteria as noted within this policy. NCPC will make telework available to the maximum extent possible as a recruitment tool to attract top employees and as retention tool for its current employees.

IV. Policy

The NCPC's policy is to allow employees and on-site contractors to telework up to four days a week with one mandatory onsite workday. All NCPC employees and contractors are required to work in the office on Tuesday each week unless in training, on official travel, on leave, or participating in, or attending, other official business. Other situations that may negate the onsite work requirement may include an Office of Personnel Management mandate to implement full time telework due situations such as a national emergency, inclement weather, or natural disaster.

Employees may request a waiver to the one-day onsite work requirement for other extenuating circumstances. Requests for waiver should be submitted to the employee's supervisor and coordinated with the Telework Managing Officer (Director of Administration) and the Telework Coordinator (Human Resources Specialist). All requests for waiver will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

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V. Key Definitions

The following definitions are important to understanding and following the NCPC's telework program:

A. Agency Worksite. The offices where the agency's official work activities are based; specifically, at 401 9th Street, NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20004.

B. Alternate Worksite. The approved telework site, usually the employee's local residence within the Washington, DC, Maryland, or Virginia commuting area.

C. Approving Official. The NCPC employee's first level supervisor.

D. Telework. An arrangement in which an employee performs official duties away from the agency's worksite.

E. Telework Agreement. A written document, signed by the employee and approving official that establishes the terms and conditions of the telework arrangement.

F. Telework Coordinator. NCPC's Human Resources Specialist that assists the Telework Management Officer (Director, Office of Administration) with the implementation of the NCPC's telework program.

G. Telework Managing Officer. The Director of Office of Administration who has primary responsibility for oversight and implementation of the NCPC's telework program.

F. Telework-Ready. All NCPC employees must be telework ready, meaning there is a signed, annually certified, telework agreement in place.

H. Telework Schedule. The days and work hours each week, pay period, or month when an employee is approved for telework. While NCPC authorizes telework up to four days a week, employees may opt to reduce the number of telework days and instead, opt to work onsite more than one-day per week.

VI. Responsibilities

A. Telework Managing Officer/Director, Office of Administration, is responsible for:

1. Managing the NCPC's telework program and ensuring the NCPC telework policy complies with the governing laws and regulations.
2. Developing guidelines for implementation consistent with accomplishing the agency's mission.
3. Providing oversight to ensure compliance with the federal telework program.
4. Conducting periodic evaluations of the program to include an assessment of the program's effectiveness.

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5. Consulting with supervisors and employees participating in the telework program.
6. Soliciting feedback on the program from teleworkers and supervisors.
7. Assisting supervisors and employees in addressing and resolving issues that arise in conjunction with a telework arrangement.
8. Maintaining appropriate documentation related to telework arrangements.
9. Meeting reporting requirements established by the Office of Personnel Management.

B. Telework Coordinator is responsible for:

1. Ensuring employees are eligible to participate in the telework program.
2. Ensuring all requirements of the telework policy have been met.
3. Coordinating telework training for supervisors and employees.

C. Supervisors are responsible for:

1. Ensuring the employee's work and assigned duties are suitable for telework.
2. Coordinating and reviewing requests for waivers to the one-day-a-week onsite work requirement.
3. Monitoring and evaluating work performance based on the teleworking employee's performance plan, including providing regular feedback and holding the employee accountable for results.
4. Establishing and maintaining effective communication requirements for teleworking employees, such as what the work schedule will be, when the work is accomplished, and what technology will be used to maintain regular and frequent contact.
5. Reviewing, updating, or modifying signed telework agreements annually, or terminating telework agreements as appropriate for reasons such as a decline in employee performance, failure to adhere to the agreement, or changes in office priorities or needs.
6. Ensuring signed telework agreements comply with agency policy and guidance regarding information systems, technology, security, safety, privacy, confidentiality, and records retention and disposition.
7. Ensuring out-of-office work of a teleworker does not adversely impact the business of the NCPC.
8. Ensuring the employees' hours of work performed while teleworking is recorded accurately in the time and attendance system.
9. Ensuring all workers, regardless of telework schedule, are treated equitably for purposes of human resources management.

D. Employees are responsible for:

1. Observing all terms, conditions, and procedures of the telework agreement.
2. Complying with all agency policies and guidance regarding information systems, technology, security, safety, privacy, confidentiality, and records retention and disposition.

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3. Complying with applicable personnel, administrative, EEO policies and Standards of Conduct.
4. Completing all assigned work in accordance with guidance and instructions.
5. Being accessible and maintaining communication with the supervisor and co-workers while teleworking, this includes maintaining contact with the supervisor or manager during an office closure due to inclement weather, an emergency or COOP activation.
6. Ensuring that a proper working environment is maintained at the alternate worksite (i.e., keeping personal disruptions to a minimum, maintaining necessary equipment, addressing issues of your own safety, etc).

VII. Training

The Telework Coordinator must ensure telework training is provided to supervisors and employees. Employees must complete on-line training prior to participating in the telework program at www.telework.gov (*Telework Fundamentals - Employee Training*); and supervisors must complete on-line training prior to approving telework agreements at www.telework.gov (*Telework Fundamentals - Manager Training*).

VIII. Telework Agreement

All eligible NCPC employees must have a signed telework agreement on file. Telework Agreements must be recertified annually. See Appendix for example of the NCPC's Telework Agreement and Safety Checklist.

- A. Terms and Conditions.** A telework agreement must be signed by the employee, the supervisor, and the Telework Managing Officer. The signed agreement documents the commitment by the employee and the supervisor to adhere to the applicable telework policy and guidelines as delineated herein. A telework agreement must be in place before an employee may telework.
- B. Safety Certification Checklist.** Each teleworking employee must complete and sign a self-certification safety checklist that proclaims the home as a safe working environment.
- C. Compliance with IT Security Requirements.** Telework employees must comply with NCPC security procedures to protect government information and data integrity. Supervisors should consult with the IT Security Officer and the Privacy Act Officer on decisions regarding the proper use and handling of sensitive data, as well as records subject to the Privacy Act. Care must be taken to ensure that records subject to the Privacy Act and sensitive non-classified data are not disclosed to anyone except those who are authorized access to such information. Employees who have access to records subject to the Privacy Act from their remote worksite must maintain

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appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards as required by the security officials to ensure the security and confidentiality of records.

IX. Work/Life Balance and Telework

Telework can provide employees with more time for family responsibilities by reducing commuting time, and increasing flexibility to balance work and family needs, but it is not intended to be a substitute for dependent care. The telework location is considered an extension of the workplace. During telework hours, employees are expected to complete their work and be available to perform duties just as they would at their normal worksite. In emergency situations when employees are mandated to telework but have dependent care responsibilities that may disrupt or prevent work accomplishment; the employee should then request annual leave or other paid time off. When possible, affected employees should consult with their supervisor to develop a flexible daily telework schedule that allows the employee to accomplish at least a portion of scheduled work instead of taking leave for an entire day.

X. Fulltime Telework (5 Days a Week)

Following are categories of fulltime telework that may be granted to NCPC employees.

- A. Fulltime Telework as a Reasonable Accommodation:** Employees with qualified disabilities may be offered the opportunity to telework up to five days a week as a reasonable accommodation. Please see the NCPC's Reasonable Accommodation Request Procedures or contact the Director of Office of Administration for additional information.
- B. Fulltime Telework Due to Medical Condition:** An employee may be provided the option to telework five days a week because he or she is temporarily unable to come to the office due to a temporary medical condition. Please contact the Telework Managing Officer/Director of Office of Administration for additional information.
- C. Fulltime Telework Due to an Emergency:** Emergency or Continuity of Operations (COOP) telework for five days a week may be implemented at the direction of the Office of Personnel Management, the Office of Management and Budget, the White House, the NCPC Executive Director, the NCPC Director of Office of Administration or other designated federal authority. All NCPC telework-ready staff will follow the procedures outlined in the NCPC's Continuity of Operations Policy. When warranted, emergency telework may be granted for an indefinite period.

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XI. Alternate Work Schedule (AWS) and Telework

With the supervisor's approval, employees may work an alternative work schedule along with maximum telework. If participating in both work schedule options (AWS and telework), employees are expected to complete their work and be available to perform duties just as they would at their normal worksite.

XII. Requirements to Maintain Telework Eligibility

To remain eligible for telework, an employee must meet performance and conduct standards such as:

- A.** Maintain an overall performance rating of Fully Successful or higher.
- B.** Possess the necessary resources to conduct NCPC business (e.g., internet, adequate safe space, connectivity, .etc.)
- C.** Not have been subject to a disciplinary action.
- D.** Not have been placed on leave restrictions.
- E.** Not be in a position that requires, daily, direct interaction with the public and staff.

XIII. Alternate Workspace and Safety Requirements

There are several workspace requirements that must be met before an employee is eligible to telework:

- A. Designated Workspace:** Employees must have a specific room or area of a room designated to perform their official duties. The workspace will include at a minimum, an adequate work area such as a desk or table, a suitable chair, internet connection, appropriate lighting, and sufficient electrical service for equipment.
- B. Safety Requirements:** The alternate workspace must be free from personal distractions and safety hazards. Employees working at home are responsible for ensuring that their worksites are safe and in compliance with safety guidelines. All teleworking employees must complete a safety self-certification checklist.
- C. Reporting Injuries and Worker's Compensation:** All federal employees are covered by the Federal Employee's Compensation Act during official duty; this includes employees working at alternate worksites. Should an accident occur while in a telework status, employees bear the responsibility to inform their immediate supervisor of an injury as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours from the date when the injury occurred. Supervisor(s) must ensure that claims are brought to the attention of the Office of Administration immediately. A supervisor's signature on a claim for workers' compensation attests only to what the supervisor can reasonably be expected to know, whether the event occurred at the normal worksite or at an alternate worksite while performing official duties.

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D. Equipment, Furniture, and Utilities: Employees must use their government-issued laptops. Monitors, printers, keyboards, and other peripheral equipment is the responsibility of the employee; however, can be provided by the NCPC on a case-by-case basis. The teleworker is responsible for providing other necessary items for telework such as furniture, utilities, high-speed internet access, and all other related services required for telework. The NCPC IT staff will provide advice on work-related products, but will not provide at-home support services, such as assisting the teleworker in troubleshooting an internet connection.

XIV. Modification, Temporary Suspension, or Termination of Telework

A. Modification: The Executive Director or Division Directors may request that an employee or the entire NCPC staff, increase the number of on-site workdays at any time to meet the needs of the agency. Except for a one-time change, modifications to the maximum four-day-a week policy that affects the entire staff will be made in writing. Modifications that affect an employee or a single Division must be documented, either by initialed changes on the original telework agreement or through execution of a new agreement(s). Modified agreements must be sent to the Telework Managing Officer.

B. Temporary or Full Suspension of Telework: Organizational needs may require an employee's or the entire NCPC staff to be present at the worksite for a temporary period or for an indefinite period. As such, an employee's Division Director or the Executive Director retains the right to require an employee to be present in the office full time. Except in emergency situations, an employee, or if applicable, the entire NCPC staff will be given a minimum 24-hours advance notice when required to report to the office full time.

APPENDIX

Telework Agreement and Safety Checklist



TELEWORK AGREEMENT

Employee Name: _____

Title, Series, and Grade: _____

Division: _____

Telework Location: _____

Phone Number at telework location: _____

Telework Schedule: For recurring telework, provide the specific day and work hours during which employee will telework (e.g., Monday or Wednesday each week, 2nd Thursday of each pay period, 1st Monday of every month, etc.). For non-recurring telework, specify whether it will be “intermittent” or “short-term” (include day(s) and work hours for short-term).

Projected projects/tasks/duties to be performed while teleworking (a separate document may be attached if necessary): _____

Terms and conditions of telework participation:

1. Telework participation is voluntary on the part of the employee and the supervisor. Participation in the program may be terminated at any time by either party.
2. The employee and the supervisor must obtain and review a copy of the NCPC Telework POLICY. Signature on this agreement constitutes commitment to abide by all rules, procedures, terms, and conditions of the telework program as described in the POLICY and in this agreement.
3. If working at home, the employee has completed a Self-Certification Safety Checklist to certify that the home is in compliance with safety guidelines.
4. Unless otherwise agreed, the employee will continue to work the same work schedule while teleworking as was approved for the normal work site. A different work schedule may be established in accordance with the work schedule policies of the organization and the NCPC, if requested by the employee and approved by the supervisor.
5. The employee is prohibited from working overtime, compensatory time and/or credit hours while teleworking, unless officially requested and approved at least 24 hours in advance.

6. The employee will telework in accordance with the schedule identified in this agreement. The employee may be required to forego telework on a scheduled telework day if work obligations require that he or she must report to the normal worksite. The “missed” telework day may not be rescheduled, unless permitted at supervisor's discretion. Unscheduled telework is permitted if announced by OPM.
7. The employee and the supervisor will make and adhere to arrangements for all necessary administrative procedures, including time and attendance, request and approval of leave, review of work products and accomplishments, and appropriate communications while teleworking.
8. The duties, tasks, and projects to be completed while teleworking have been documented in this agreement. The employee and supervisor are responsible for making appropriate modifications to this agreement in the event that the work to be performed while teleworking changes over time. Procedures for periodic review of completed assignments, work products, and other accomplishments while teleworking must be established and the employee and supervisor will be responsible for regularly reviewing and discussing work products.
9. As a telework-ready employee, the employee is required to telework during office closures. On office closures, if a telework-ready employee chooses not to telework for all or part of the workday, he/she must request annual leave, sick leave, or leave without pay as appropriate for the entire workday or a portion of it.

Request:

By signing below, the requesting employee agrees to abide by all terms and conditions contained in this agreement and the NCPC Telework Policy.

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Approval:

By signing below, the supervisor approves telework and agrees to abide by all terms and conditions contained in this agreement and the NCPC Telework Policy.

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Certification:

I certify that the above employee is eligible for participation in the program and that all requirements of the NCPC Telework Program Policy have been met.

Telework Managing Officer: _____ Date: _____

The completed Telework Agreement must be approved and certified before telework can be performed.

Attachment: Self-Certification Safety Checklist for Home-Based Teleworking



SELF-CERTIFICATION SAFETY CHECKLIST FOR HOME-BASED TELEWORKING

Name: _____
Office: _____
Location: _____
Phone: _____

The following checklist is designed to assess the overall safety of the alternate worksite. Each participant should read and complete the self-certification safety checklist. Upon completion, the checklist should be signed and dated by the participating employee.

The alternate worksite location: _____

Describe designated work area: _____

A. WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

1. Are temperatures, noise, ventilation, and lighting levels adequate to maintain your normal level of job performance? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Are all stairs with four or more steps equipped with handrails? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Does the electrical system conform to appropriate local building codes? ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Are aisles, doorways, and corners free of obstructions to permit visibility and movement? ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Are file cabinets and storage closets arranged so drawers and doors do not open into walkways? ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Are chairs free of loose casters (wheels) and are legs of the chairs sturdy? ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Are the phone lines, electrical cords, and extension wires secured under a desk or alongside a baseboard? ☐ Yes ☐ No
8. Is the office space neat, clear, and free of excessive amounts of combustibles? ☐ Yes ☐ No
9. Are floor surfaces (including carpets) clean, dry, levels, and free of worn or frayed seams? ☐ Yes ☐ No
10. Is there enough light for reading? ☐ Yes ☐ No

B. COMPUTER WORKSTATION (if applicable)

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Is your chair adjustable? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 2. Is your back adequately supported by a backrest? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 3. Is your computer monitor eye level? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 4. When keying, are your forearms close to parallel with the floor? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| 5. Are your wrists fairly straight when keying? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

Employee Signature: _____ Date _____

This certification must be completed as part of the Telework Agreement.