OFFICE TELEWORK POLICY

Issued: [insert date]

*This establishes guidance on telework for [Insert name of Organization]. Telework allows staff to work from a location other than the main office when it is reasonable and practical to do so and when operational needs will not be adversely affected. Participation is a benefit subject to management approval, not an entitlement. All requests to participate will be reviewed for compliance with eligibility, program requirements, and the needs of the office.*

**Eligibility**

* Who does the policy apply to, e.g., employees only? Outline who is eligible and what duties are eligible or simply state that staff must meet NIH and IC eligibility criteria. See the NIH criteria at <https://hr.nih.gov/working-nih/work-schedules/telework>; check with your IC Telework Coordinator on IC-specific criteria.
* If contractors or non-FTE staff work in the office, who should they consult with about being eligible for telework?

**Approvals**

* What documents have to be filled out?
* Who approves requests for employees, contractors, and non-FTE staff?

**Locations**

* What are acceptable locations for telework, e.g., home, telework centers?

**Frequency**

* State the types of arrangements that will be considered, e.g., regular telework, ad hoc telework.
* Can staff be on both types of arrangements, e.g., a regular schedule of \_\_ days per pay period and ad hoc for emergencies?
* What is the maximum number of telework days that can be requested per pay period? Employees have to work in the office at least 2 days per pay period or their duty station must be changed.
* How long will agreements be valid? This can range from a short trial period of 3 months with a re-assessment at the end of that time or up to the maximum of 1 year.

**Training**

* Make a statement that telework, Privacy Act, and information security training are mandatory. The last two are annual requirements from NIH.
* Are there other training requirements, e.g., IC-specific training?

**Property/services**

* What computer and other technology resources/applications will be provided by the office?
* Are there limits on what equipment or services can be requested, e.g., staff are expected to use their personal internet service; staff are expected to maintain a personal phone at the location for use during telework.
* What office supplies will be provided?
* Who will service/maintain equipment?
* Will any costs be reimbursed, e.g., internet costs, phone calls, etc.?
* Will both regular and ad hoc telework get the same level of equipment/services?

**Performance**

* How will work assignment updates be reported and to whom? (How will assignments be given? Will due dates be set? Will a first draft be required to ensure the work reflects the desired end product?)
* Will staff be expected to work during emergencies or take personal leave?
* Will the evaluation criteria for performance be any different than it is for onsite work? How are results and outputs to be measured?
* What are the communication expectations for telework, e.g., include a statement on maintaining the same level of effective communications with customers and colleagues as is done in the office.
* Include a statement about the expectation for the appropriate use of duty time, per ethics policies.

**Work Schedule**

* Are there days that everyone has to be in the office?
* Do staff have to attend regularly scheduled meetings in-person?
* Can they request approval in advance to call in to a meeting? If so, which ones?
* What should staff do if work can’t continue at the telework site, e.g., due to a power outage, children being released early from school?
* What has to be pre-approved by the supervisor (leave, overtime, comp time, unscheduled/ad hoc telework, travel to the office during a telework day, changes to work schedules, etc.)?
* Will flexible work schedules and telework both be allowed?
* Make a statement about expectations for working during emergencies, i.e., using Ad hoc telework.

**Injuries**

* State that there is a mandatory requirement to report any injuries immediately.
* Simply note that employees are covered by the Workers' Compensation Act if injured while performing official duties.

**Records**

* Are staff allowed to access NIH systems, shared drives, etc.? Are they to use VPN so they’re connected to the NIH network?
* Can confidential/sensitive information be taken to or accessed at the telework site? Are there requirements for using it there, e.g., only accessing it through VPN, no paper documents being taken out of the office, using only Govt-issued encrypted flash drives, etc.?

Approved:

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Supervisor Signature Date

**SAMPLE OFFICE POLICY ON TELEWORK:** This is intended to be an example of things managers/supervisors should consider for a simple office policy on telework. Creating one can help to standardize expectations for telework and implement it consistently. This form is not mandatory but can be used to establish the framework for telework in an office. The IC policy should serve as a reference.