

FAQs: Teleworking (Work from Home)

Q: What is teleworking?

A: Telework is a alternative that allows employees to work at home, at a nearby satellite facility, or from a “virtual office” wherever they are. Teleworking, also known as working from home, replaces travel to and from work with telecommunications technologies. The goal of telework is to bring work to the employees rather than bringing employees to work. As a result, teleworkers spend less time on the road traveling to and from the office, and more time doing work and other valuable activities. Most employees who participate in telework usually do so only once or twice per week, on the other hand, some telework full time and only go to the office on an occasional basis.

Q: What is the benefit for the employer who supports teleworking?

A: Studies have shown that teleworking can improve a company’s bottom line as managers have witnessed improved productivity, reduced overhead, improved retention and recruitment, and reduced absenteeism from employees who perform telework, even on a part-time basis.

Q: What type of equipment is needed for teleworking?

A: Teleworking can be done with as little technology as a phone, a piece of paper, and a pen or may involve computer hardware, software, email, internet access, and other technologies. The amount and type of equipment required for successful teleworking will depend on the nature of the job, the activities to be performed, and the frequency of teleworking.

Q: What types of jobs are appropriate for teleworking?

A: Most “information-based” jobs are appropriate for teleworking. Teleworking is ideal for jobs that require reading, writing, research, working with data, and talking on the phone. Many jobs that may not seem appropriate at first may be modified so that the worker can telework on a part-time basis. One of the keys to designing a good teleworking program lies in the ability to organize specific jobs so that they can be done without constant interaction or need for feedback.

Q: Which employees are ideal for teleworking?

A: The ideal teleworker is well organized, can work independently, and requires minimal supervision. Successful

teleworkers have a high degree of job skill and knowledge, and strong time-management skills. Teleworkers like working at home or away from the office for at least part of the week, and don’t mind working alone. Teleworking is not ideal or desirable for every employee.

Q: Who is the ideal manager for supervising teleworkers?

A: The ideal manager of teleworkers (telemanager) has a positive attitude toward teleworking and is willing to allow employees to telework. A telemanager manages by results and not by monitoring work hours. Telemanagers delegate work easily, are well organized, and trust their employees. Not every manager is comfortable with a style of management that is conducive to successful teleworking.

Q: How do I know if the teleworkers are really working?

A: The employee’s completed work product is the indicator. Telemanagers must focus on quantity, quality, and timeliness. They must manage by objectives (results) rather than manage by direct observation.

Q: Will employees work less if they are at home working unsupervised?

A: No, survey results showed marked improvements in productivity. Productivity with employees who perform tasks as teleworkers increases because the employees typically have fewer distractions and interruptions, work at their peak times and experience less stress due to the absence of the commute to work.

Q: What happens if the employee is injured at home while working?

A: If the employee is hurt while working, he or she is covered for workers compensation, just as in a regular place of business.

Q: Is teleworking a substitute for child or elder-care?

A: No, a telecommuter must focus on his or her job, not handle demanding child or elder-care situations. However, due to their flexibility, telecommuters are better able to manage their work / family schedules.

For more information

<http://www.icommutesd.com/WorkFromHome.aspx>