

# Telework Directives

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COVID-19 forced a rapid increase in telework for WSDOT employees and illustrated the untapped potential of increased telework. Below you'll find policy directives that guide changes to policies, process and practices associated with telework at WSDOT. Telework will be increased in a manner that will:

- Enhance employees' productivity, satisfaction, and ability to collaborate.
- Improve recruitment and retention.
- Support a modern work environment.
- Expand job opportunities to more areas of the state via virtual work.
- Reduce vehicle trips and associated pollutants, congestion, and energy use.

**Important note:** COVID-19 related telework policies and practices remain in effect. Policy directives will be implemented only as safety and public health guidance permit.

**What is telework?** (for the purposes of this document)

- **Telework** is work from home and remote work. It does not include field work.
- **Work from home** is working from home or another location that does not involve a commute.
- **Remote work** is working in a location that reduces (but does not eliminate) a commute.

## Guiding principles

- Telework is supported to the greatest extent possible whenever it is feasible regardless of job classification, pay rate, organization, or location. Key aspects of feasibility include:
  - business needs, delivering for the public
  - employee satisfaction
  - safety, including ergonomic safety
- Telework, either part- or full-time, is encouraged but not mandated for employees.
- WSDOT is continuing efforts to ensure that telework and remote work are available to employees on an equitable basis, keeping in mind business needs and safety.
- Collective bargaining agreements take precedent.
- WSDOT focuses on job performance and results rather than work location.

## Policy directives

**Who teleworks?**

- Telework is encouraged but not mandated for employees. Employees may opt in to telework.
- Employees may telework when business needs can be met and in consultation with their supervisor and appointing authority. Some positions will be suitable for frequent and routine telework, others on an occasional basis, and others not at all.
- Appointing authorities, in consultation with Human Resources, may restrict or deny employee requests for telework. The reasons are documented and shared with the employee. Restrictions or denials may be appealed.
- Telework suitability is based upon job duties. Supervisors will add information about telework eligibility to position descriptions during routine updates.

**Where can telework occur?**

- Both work from home and remote work are encouraged and supported.
- Employees are responsible for ensuring that their work location is safe, including ergonomics.
- For now, duty stations are designated at a WSDOT office location regardless of telework.
- Supervisors and appointing authorities are encouraged to support employees who wish to telework full time. This may enable employees to live far from their duty station if they can meet business needs.
- Research and analyses are underway to update guidance regarding employees who wish to telework out of state or out of country. Employees who wish to telework out of state or out of country on a temporary basis must obtain permission from their supervisor and appointing authority in consultation with Human Resources.

**What will telework schedules look like?**

- Supervisors, with support of appointing authorities and in consultation with employees, determine designated work schedules, schedule adjustments, core workdays, core work hours, and designated in-office collaboration days.
- WSDOT encourages flexibility in designated work schedules.
- WSDOT encourages flexibility in informal and ad hoc schedule adjustments. This includes work during weekends, split shifts, and early and late work hours. Note: collective bargaining agreements take precedent.

**Can WSDOT employees care for dependents while teleworking?**

- WSDOT employees may care for dependents while teleworking if the care does not diminish work performance and delivery.

**What technology will be provided to enable telework?**

- WSDOT has requested additional resources to expedite telework-related technology upgrades and to ensure they are available agencywide.
- To enable telework WSDOT is standardizing core workstations to include a laptop or tablet, dual monitors, docking station, wireless keyboard and mouse, headset, and web camera. Among other benefits, this will improve ease of drop-in station use.
- WSDOT will also provide any additional technology needed to perform essential job functions.
- Employees may receive one standardized core workstation. If they choose to use the workstation equipment at home, they may use drop-in desks and monitors when at the office.
- Employees are encouraged to print and scan on days when they work in a WSDOT office.
- WSDOT is working to acquire applications that enable scanning at home, such as phone apps.
- WSDOT is expediting efforts to move to electronic records and electronic signatures.
- WSDOT IT support focuses on state-provided technologies and services. Employees are advised to contact their service provider for assistance with other technologies and services like Wi-Fi.
- WSDOT is increasing the use of soft phones/Internet phones. These are described as phone numbers that follow a worker and their computer to any location.
- WSDOT is implementing workspace management technology in some workplaces to manage shared workspaces and enable employees to make reservations, check availability, etc.

- Generally, employees provide internet access and utilities. WSDOT works on a case by case basis to support employees who struggle with this requirement.
- WSDOT is exploring the possibility of incentives to support telework.

**What training is provided to enable telework?**

- WSDOT is making telework effectiveness training available for all employees who choose to telework.
- WSDOT is updating supervisor training to include telework-specific content and to emphasize performance and delivery by teleworkers.

**What furniture will be provided to enable telework?**

- WSDOT is exploring resources to assist employees who wish to furnish their home for telework. If resources become available, they will be provided in a consistent manner statewide. WSDOT will follow the agency's reasonable accommodation process (Chapter 25, Human Resources Desk Manual).
- WSDOT will continue to provide guidance on how to create an ergonomic workspace.
- Employees who telework three or more days per week may opt to take their state-provided chair home. It is the employee's responsibility to safely transport the chair. A state vehicle may be used for this purpose.
- WSDOT is working with the Department of Enterprise Services to make surplus office furniture available to employees for purchase.
- WSDOT is moving to a modern work environment on a location by location basis. Design of these environments considers increased telework; need for collaboration spaces like focus rooms, drop-in workstations, conference rooms, offices and storage areas to meet the needs of mobile workers.