

Frequently Asked Questions about Telework



Q: What is teleworking?

A: Teleworking replaces travel to, from, and for work with telecommunications technologies. It refers to working at home or another location on a full- or part-time basis. Many employees telework only once or twice per week, while other employees telework full-time and occasionally go to the office.

Q: What type of equipment is needed for teleworking?

A: Equipment needed varies widely based on the industry and nature of the business. While teleworking can be done with as little technology as a phone, most often it involves some remote access, computer hardware and software, email, and other technologies. You may need additional coordination with your IT and HR departments to assess what technology and equipment is necessary to do your job.

Q: What are some of the issues that supervisors confront with teleworkers?

A: Some supervisors can run into conflicts like employees not responding in a timely manner, confusing communication, and a feeling that employees are distracted when they telework. These concerns often stem from preconceived notions about teleworking. For resources on how to manage remote employees, check out this [USGA webpage](#).

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

A: The employee's completed work product is the indicator. Supervisors must focus on quantity, quality, and timeliness. They must manage by objectives or results, rather than by direct observation. Set clear goals that are well communicated. For top tips to manage teleworkers, read this [Forbes article](#).

Q: How will managers know how to supervise teleworkers?

A: Teleworking presents an opportunity for teleworker supervisors to become better managers. A teleworker supervisor manages by results and not by monitoring work hours. By focusing on the employee's work product, supervisors will improve their organizational abilities and their own skill in managing by objectives.

Q: How can social interaction be maintained to keep teleworkers from feeling isolated from their colleagues?

A: Many techniques are available to overcome the feeling of isolation. These include part-time teleworking, core days in the office, and frequent communication via telephone and voicemail. In addition, teleworkers should be included in all scheduled meetings and events. Teleworkers can socialize with the rest of the team digitally with video conferencing tools like Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and Google Hangouts. Employees can use these tools for more than just meetings, including virtual coffee chats, book clubs, or cooking lessons to boost employee morale and foster company connectivity.

Q: What are some of the issues that teleworkers should be aware of?

A: Teleworkers should designate a work area for teleworking in their homes. A separate room provides greater privacy but is not necessarily required. Teleworkers must gain the trust and support of their families, coworkers, clients, and managers. Teleworkers need to be aware of the tendency to work long hours and the need to take breaks.