

Work from Home Guidelines and Alternative Work Arrangements Related to COVID-19

Given the extenuating circumstances, we are offering some employees to work from home to employ the concept of social 'distancing'. The concept of social distancing (e.g., fewer people in the workplace, in food courts, on transit etc.), will help prevent the potential spread of the coronavirus. Even with some employees working from home, it is safer for all because it supports social distancing.

Many jobs at the health authorities require employees to be physically in the workplace to perform their core duties such as the provision of direct patient care to sustain services. For managers it is important to remember that where possible employees should be working from home to support the concept of social distancing. Management will identify which positions require that employees should or should not work from home. And while working from home, employees should continue to support that concept by maintaining the social distancing principles, i.e. avoiding any inessential interactions with others and taking all reasonable precautions to mitigate risk for essential interactions.

The following is an interim measure based on the COVID-19 situation and is subject to change on short notice, and may be terminated at any time. Employees may be subject to return to the workplace at any time, based on operational requirements. Once the work from home arrangement has ended, you will be required to return any hardware or equipment provided.

How to determine if employees can work from home

Employees may be able to work from home if their job does not require that they be physically at the workplace to perform their core duties, and if they have the tools and technology they need (e.g., laptop, cell phone, VPN connection) to be able to work remotely. Employees cannot self-select to work from home, they must speak to their managers. During these unique set of circumstances (global pandemic requiring as much social isolation as possible), work from home situations that might not ordinarily be considered optimal may be approved.

How to acquire the essential tools to work from home (e.g. laptop, cell phone)

We are working to secure more resources such as laptops, however, we must also consider other priority and potential needs, such as for COVID-19 planning and response. Our first priority is to support the health care system. Employees should speak to their manager about the possibility of working from home and what arrangements or equipment may be required. Please be patient as we equip staff and get our servers ready to have more people working from home.

Tips and/or guidelines for working from home

Using technology – Managers should ensure that employees know how to effectively use tools like Skype for Business, Email, and VPN. If managers and employees are not familiar with these tools, check YouTube for tutorials.

Sharing information – Decide as a group what information needs to be shared, with whom, and how frequently it needs to be shared. Information sharing can be made easier through SharePoint sites, or shared drives. Decide what knowledge needs to be shared in-person versus digitally and employees should set reminders in their schedules to ensure they meet deadlines.

- Comply with all applicable legislation, policies and procedures including Personal Health Information Act (PHIA), Occupational Health, Safety and Wellness, and Privacy and Confidentiality.
- Secure all documents containing personal information at the home site with a lock for which only the employee has the key or combination to ensure no one (whether a family member or otherwise) has the ability to access (whether deliberately or accidentally) such information.
- If transporting file materials to and from the home site to ensure security and safe guarding of materials at all times, using the most effective method available.

Employees with personal circumstances such as child or elder care that may impact their ability to attend work, must contact their immediate manager/supervisor. In some instances, there may be an opportunity to alter work schedules and consider alternate work arrangements depending on operational circumstances.

While working from home, employees should expect alternate methods of supervision which may include regular check-ins. Continue with processes for leave notifications and approvals (such as sick leave) while working from home.

While working from home may not be ideal in some circumstances, it is temporary steps like these that support our communities and our healthcare system in flattening the curve of the global pandemic.

Please note that the Work from Home Policy is a guide in this situation. A signed agreement is not necessary if there is manager approval and technical abilities to work from home.