

Work-Life

Telework and Remote Work

Telework and Remote Work FAQs: Frequently Asked Questions

Telework

What is telework?

Telework is an alternative workplace arrangement under which an employee or Service member performs the duties and responsibilities of the assigned position and other authorized activities from an approved alternative worksite but is required to report to the agency's worksite on a regular and recurring basis.

What kind of telework training is offered for supervisors?

The official website of the Federal Government's telework program can be found at [OPM.gov](https://www.opm.gov). This site provides training and resources for supervisors and employees and serves as a tool to support the successful implementation of Federal agencies' telework programs.

Is telework an employee entitlement?

There is no entitlement to telework or remote work. Telework is a strategic management tool and workplace flexibility established to facilitate the accomplishment of work while balancing the needs of the workforce. Agencies should not treat telework as an exception to a traditional full-time in-person work schedule or as a performance management tool or incentive.

Can an employee be forced to telework?

No. Employee participation in a telework program is voluntary. However, once an employee participates in a telework program, that participation will have implications for the employee, such as the expectation that the employee will telework following the current weather and safety leave policies under OPM's weather and safety leave regulations. All telework program participants and remote workers are ineligible for weather and safety leave when a closure is announced except in rare circumstances when one of the exceptions under 5 CFR 630.1605(a)(2) applies in situations where the employee is unable to travel to the agency worksite safely.

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May I continue to use the maximum telework flexibilities that were established during COVID-19 now that my Component has implemented its return to work guidance?

Department of Defense (DoD) Instruction 1035.01, Telework and Remote Work, outlines the telework flexibilities available to the DoD workforce. Components may waive the requirement to report to the regular worksite twice a bi-weekly pay period in limited instances, such as an office closure or severe weather emergency where an employee is temporarily unable to report to the agency worksite for reasons beyond the employee's control. These situations should be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis and should generally be temporary exceptions used only in cases where:

- (1) the employee is expected to return to work at the agency worksite in the near future, or
- (2) the employee is expected to continue teleworking and will be able to report to the agency worksite at least twice each bi-weekly pay period on a regular and recurring basis in the near future.

Can an employee telework while dependents are present in the home?

Telework is permissible while a dependent is present at the alternative worksite. When performing official duties, teleworkers must not engage in dependent care activities. Teleworkers must account for work and non-work hours during their tour of duty and request appropriate paid or unpaid leave to account for time spent away from normal work-related duties to care for a child or other person requiring care or supervision.

Is it possible for a manager to decline a telework request?

Yes. Each Component will determine the eligibility requirements for all employees or Service members to participate in telework. Supervisors will consider employees' or Service members' performance and conduct in making eligibility determinations. Telework will be permitted to the maximum extent possible without diminished individual or organizational performance.

Supervisors must restrict telework according to Section 6502 of Title 5, U.S.C. if the employee or Service member has been officially disciplined for the following disqualifying misconduct:

- Being absent without permission for more than 5 days in any calendar year.
- Viewing, downloading, or exchanging pornographic material on a government computer or while performing Federal Government duties.

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Do I need to have a signed telework agreement before I can telework?

Yes. Section 6502(b)(2) of Title 5, U.S.C. mandates a written agreement for any employee to participate in telework. Therefore, every telework participant must complete a DD Form 2946, regardless of whether telework is routine or situational.

Should agencies provide additional resources to telework employees such as office equipment, extra monitors, phones, headsets, chairs, and standing desks?

Components may provide office equipment to assist employees in performing their duties. Equipment provided to employees shall remain the property of the U.S. Government and must be handled per Government-wide and DoD-specific policies and guidance.

How will the teleworker's official worksite be determined?

The official worksite for a teleworker is the location of the regular worksite for the employee's or Service member's position (i.e., the agency worksite where the employee or Service member would usually work absent a telework agreement).

What constitutes a "day" for reporting to the agency worksite two days per pay period?

An employee should report to the agency worksite twice per pay period according to their approved tour of duty (work schedule). For example, an employee working 8 hours per day for 5 days a week, a work "day" is defined as 8 hours. For an employee working on a compressed work schedule of 4-10 hour days per week, a work day is defined as 10 hours.

Are civilian employees covered by Workers' Compensation when injured or suffering from work related illnesses while conducting official DoD business at the telework/remote work location?

Employees who sustain an injury or suffer from work-related illnesses while conducting official government business at the telework/remote work location are covered by the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA) 5 U.S.C. 8101. Employees should notify their supervisor if they are injured while teleworking. Employees may pursue claims in accordance with Volume 810 of DoDI 1400.25.

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Remote Work

What is remote work?

Remote Work is an alternative work arrangement in which an employee or Service member works from an approved alternative worksite (within or outside the locality pay area) of an agency worksite and is not expected to return to an agency worksite on a regular basis during each pay period.

How is remote work eligibility determined?

Supervisors will assess whether the duties and responsibilities of the position can be performed remotely and consider the impact on the mission and budgets. Supervisors should also consider potential travel costs associated with reasonable travel to the agency worksite from the employee's or Service member's permanent remote worksite.

Is it possible for a manager to decline an employee-initiated remote work request?

Yes. Supervisors will consider the ability for duties and responsibilities to be performed from a remote location as well as the employee's or Service member's performance and conduct when making eligibility determinations. When a request is denied, the supervisors must provide the written basis for the denial and, if appropriate, include information about when the requestor may reapply and actions the requestor may take, if any, for a remote request to be approved.

What is the official worksite for remote workers?

The official worksite for a remote worker will be their home or other approved alternative location away from the agency worksite, where an employee is authorized to work and regularly perform their official duties and responsibilities.

Is an agreement required for an employee to participate in remote work?

Yes. Similar to telework, a written agreement is required for an employee to participate in remote work. Every remote worker must have a signed Remote Work Agreement approved by their supervisor.



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Is telework training required for remote workers?

Yes. Supervisors, employees, and Service members authorized to work remotely are required to complete telework training and any Component-specific training before entering into a remote work agreement.

Can remote work agreements be terminated?

Yes. The supervisor may terminate a remote work agreement if it no longer meets mission requirements, the needs of the workgroup, or due to misconduct or non-compliance with the terms of the remote work agreement or other business-based reasons. The employee or Service member may also request to terminate a remote work agreement. Both parties should consider cost implications as outlined in the remote work agreement.

Can employees appeal remote work denials or terminations?

Yes. Employees may appeal denials or terminations through their component administrative grievance procedures or collectively bargained grievance procedures for bargaining unit employees. Service members may request reconsideration through their appropriate chain of command.

If an employee is authorized to work remotely from one location, can they work remotely from a different location?

A remote worker is only authorized to work from the approved alternative location, as indicated in the remote work agreement. If an employee would like to temporarily work from a different location not listed on the remote work agreement. Changes in work locations must be approved verbally or in writing by the supervisor before an employee relocates to a new alternate location. A permanent change to a new alternate work location should be requested in writing and submitted to the supervisor for approval 30 days in advance.

Whether to grant remote worker status is within the Component's discretion. Components are not required to cover relocation expenses for employee-initiated requests for remote work, as such requests are for the employee's convenience and benefit.

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Can remote workers still be required to report to the office?

Yes. If a remote worker is approved to work remotely, they are not required to report to the office on a regular and recurring basis during each pay period. However, agencies can require employees to report to the office occasionally as needed to meet mission requirements or to carry out the functions of their duties and responsibilities. Agencies should consider travel costs when the remote worker's position of record is outside the local commuting area of the agency worksite.

Is travel paid if a remote worker is required to report to the office?

Reimbursements for travel expenses are made in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulations Section 300-3.1. Temporary Duty Travel (TDY) is applied based on the location of the employee's permanent worksite, which is documented on the employee's SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action. Local travel may be provided, as indicated by the Components' local travel policy. Agencies should evaluate the travel costs associated with this requirement before approving any remote agreements.

Does an agency have to provide office space for a remote worker?

No. Remote workers should not have an assigned or dedicated workspace at the agency worksite.

Domestic Employees Teleworking Overseas (DETO)

What is a DETO?

A Domestic Employee Teleworking Overseas (DETO) is a United States Government employee assigned to a domestic position with an alternative work arrangement permitting a remote worksite from an overseas location for a limited period of time.

Who can approve a DETO?

The State Department must approve all DETO requests. DoD Components may develop their internal procedures to determine DETO eligibility. However, the Chief of Mission (COM) within each country where the work will take place has the ultimate authority to approve the arrangement. The circumstances of approvals will vary from country to country as well as from case to case.

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What is the processing time for a review of a DETO request?

On average, DETO requests can take up to 6-9 months to review for final determination.

Is a DETO agreement required?

The requirements for DETO arrangements are the same as the requirements for telework. However, in addition to DoD requirements, Department of State requirements will also apply to all employees working under a DETO agreement.

Can a DETO agreement be amended?

Yes. Supervisors may amend DETO agreements at any time by providing written justification based on the office's needs and with prior notification of 90 days. Amended agreements must be routed through the State Department's National Security Decision Directive 38 approval process for final approval determination by the COM.

Can a DETO agreement be terminated before its prescribed termination date?

Yes. Either the employee or supervisor may cancel a DETO agreement before its prescribed termination date. The notice of cancellation must be submitted, in writing, 90 calendar days before the effective date.

