

Sample Policy for Telecommuting

(Please ensure alignment with the organisation's current policies)

I. Scheme

Employees in Team A will be a pilot on telecommuting.

The pilot will run for 6 months.

The pilot team will be allowed to work remotely for ___ days per week. While it is assumed that the remote site is most likely to be the employee's home, the employee may decide to work at other remote sites provided that the infrastructure allows him/her to be connected to, and enables, communication.

II. Hours of Work

The working hours on days in which the employee works remotely will remain the same. However, as the employee need not commute to work, the team manager may consider staggering the start and end times but retain core hours of _____ to _____.

III. Scheduling

During the pilot programme, team members are requested to keep to their chosen days until the scheme stabilises and team members and managers are familiar with the scheme.

Employees on a longer term telecommuting arrangement may be required to come into the office for meetings with the manager and co-workers on a regular basis, e.g. weekly.

IV. Security

In planning for secure telecommuting, management must first determine what type of access is needed. What systems and data do employees need? What is the sensitivity of these systems and data? Do they need system administrator privileges? Do they need to share files with other employees? Is the data confidential?

If possible, managers should put all the resources needed by telecommuting employees outside of a secure gateway.

However, most telecommuting employees require more access. For traveling employees, this may be limited to access to email. There are many firewall implementations that use an email proxy to allow access to the files on a protected system without having to directly access that system.

However, some telecommuting employees need access to internal resources. The employees may need to use a variety of resources such as local area network (LAN)

applications, mainframe applications, running client software, or Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP) services.

A secure gateway, or series of gateways, can be used to divide internal resources based on access need of telecommuters.

For most organisations, robust authentication should be required if access is given to internal systems. However, organisations should require robust authentication even for email if it is relied upon to discuss business decisions (i.e., if the organisation would care if someone else read your email).

Robust authentication increases security in two significant ways. It can require the user to possess a token in addition to a password or personal identification number (PIN). Tokens when used with PINs provide significantly more security than passwords.

Employees should be granted limited access to install and/or remove software and other applications. The organisation's IT department should retain administrative rights for security reasons.

V. Starting & Ending

The manager has a right to review the employee's suitability for telecommuting. General guidelines to determine eligibility for telecommuting could include the following:

- a. Job function / role, e.g. degree of face-to-face interaction or physical presence required to accomplish the job
- b. Past performance record
- c. Competencies and skills, e.g. organisational, time management & planning skills
- d. Work style, e.g. ability to work independently and prioritise

Mid-project review

A mid-project review should be done to assess the impact on business results, employee behaviours, workflow and workplace practices.

Any negative impact should be reviewed for a possible solution, e.g. expected frequency of progress updates, regular communication with the rest of the team, etc. If a solution may be found, the telecommuting arrangement can proceed.

If no reasonable solution can be found, both the manager and the employee each have the right to terminate the arrangement, and revert to the original working arrangement.

VI. Communications

Communication is critical to successful telecommuting, and employees must be accessible to their manager, co-workers and clients, where applicable, on days they telecommute.

Where possible, employees may have their office phone calls forwarded to their home phone or mobile phones, or provide their mobile phone numbers directly available to their managers, co-workers and clients.

Employees are expected to respond to phone calls and emails within _____ on days they telecommute, unless otherwise agreed on with their manager.

Break times and lunch time may be pre-arranged to ensure a timely response and coverage of duties of co-workers in the office, when necessary. This should be pre-arranged with the manager before the employee begins telecommuting.

VII. Office Equipment & Reimbursements

The organisation will provide the necessary equipment and/or reimburse the employee on the use of their own equipment for a telecommuting arrangement, e.g. laptop, blackberry, phone, printer, fax machine, internet access, utilities, etc.

Equipment and resources provided by the organisation should be used only for the purposes for work, unless otherwise indicated.

Reimbursement for use of the employee's own equipment and/or utilities will be based on _____ (e.g. itemised breakdown of usage and original receipts submitted / flat rate per month / % reimbursement of actual receipt, etc.)

Any other out-of-pocket expenses arising from the telecommuting arrangement will be reimbursed on a case-by-case basis based on prior written approval by the manager, according to the organisation's employee reimbursement policy.

VIII. Performance Appraisal

The manager and the employee must have a thorough shared understanding of what constitutes successful performance of the job. A major requirement for successful telecommuting is the establishment of performance criteria used to measure job performance.

Management by Results is one method of measure job performance by focusing on results (outcomes and deliverables):

REVIEW

Review current job tasks and responsibilities to achieve mutual agreement between the manager and employee.

ESTABLISH

Establish measurable outcomes and deliverables.

SPECIFY

Specify who receives or monitors the outcomes and deliverables, and when interim checkpoints and due dates will occur.

USE

Use language that avoids subjectivity, vagueness and interpretation.
Be clear and specific to avoid misunderstanding about what is required.

LINK

Link outcomes and deliverables to organisational goals. It is important that we understand the importance of our work functions in relation to the organisation's goals, mission, products and services.

TRACK

Track results. How do you track your performance today? Do you use performance appraisal forms? Monthly reports?
Tracking results allows you to compare from review period to review period how you are doing.

SCHEDULE

Schedule on-going evaluation and revise as necessary. This applies to both on-going, formal evaluation of your job performance and the *Management by Results* process. Make changes to each of these as appropriate.

As part of effective performance management and coaching, the manager must provide regular feedback. Employees want to know if they're doing a good job, and they also want to know if they aren't meeting expectations. Feedback is especially important for employees on a telecommuting arrangement, so that they know how they are doing and in what areas they can make improvements to make the telecommuting arrangement a success.

IX. Additional Information

The telecommuting arrangement is not intended to permit employee to have time to work at other jobs, run their own businesses, or to provide child care or elder care during their scheduled work hours. Failure to fulfil normal work requirements, both qualitative and quantitative, may be cause for disciplinary action or termination of the telecommuting arrangement and/or the employment relationship.

All telecommuting arrangements are granted on a temporary and revocable basis, and may be discontinued by the organisation at any time and for any reason. In addition, an employee may discontinue participation in telecommuting at any time.

A new telecommuting agreement must be submitted each fiscal year.