

National Aeronautics and Space Administration



NASA DESK GUIDE ON TELEWORK PROGRAMS

Version 2

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SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

This section provides an overview of the document content, as well as how the information is arranged.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this desk guide is to provide guidance to National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) managers and Human Resources (HR) personnel regarding flexible work arrangements by which an employee performs his or her assigned duties at home or other approved worksites and not at his or her regular place of employment.

1.2 Background

As the need for flexibilities in the workplace increases and as managers and employees explore options, the need for guidelines also increases. This desk guide provides guidance on the Telework Program and should be read in conjunction with the NASA Telework Policy established in NASA Procedural Requirements (NPR) 3600.2, NASA Telework Program, and any applicable Center telework policies. In addition, managers should consult with their Center Human Resources Office (HRO) for further information and guidance.

1.3 Applicability

This desk guide is applicable to NASA Headquarters and NASA Centers, including Component Facilities, and the NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC). Unless otherwise stated, the use of the word Center(s) in the text of this document includes NASA Headquarters and the NSSC and any reference to Center Director(s) includes the Executive Director, Headquarters Operations and the Executive Director, NSSC. This desk guide is for use by NASA Center HROs and NASA managers.

1.4 About This Document

This document contains information on regulations and processes relating to the Telework Program. The following appendix is included in this document:

- Appendix A, Acronyms and Abbreviations

SECTION 2 – REFERENCES

This document contains references that, in some cases, are for specific subparagraphs; however, this section generally lists the primary document or code. In addition, when a Web link is available, it is provided here for your convenience. Since Web links may become invalid, the document names and numbers are provided as available. The following references were used in the preparation of this desk guide:

- a. Telephone Installation and Charges, 31 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 1348.
- b. Determining an Employee's Official Worksite, 5 C.F.R., § 531.605.
- c. NPR 1382.1, NASA Privacy Procedural Requirements.
- d. NPR 1441.1, NASA Records Retention Schedules.
- e. NPR 1600.1, NASA Security Program Procedural Requirements.
- f. NPR 3600.2, NASA Telework Program.
- g. NPR 4200.1, NASA Equipment Management Procedural Requirements.
- h. DOL Form CA-1, Federal Employee's Notice of Traumatic Injury and Claim for Continuation of Pay/Compensation.
- i. Federal Tort Claims Act.
- j. GSA Federal Information Resources Management Regulations (FIRMR) Bulletin C-8, Information Accessibility for Employees with Disabilities, (<http://www.estrategy.gov/documents/c08.pdf>).
- k. NASA Office of Human Capital Management (OHCM) Continuity of Operations (COOP)/Pandemic Desk Guide. To view, go to the NASA Desk Guides Web page at: <http://nasapeople.nasa.gov/references/deskguides.htm>, then click the applicable link.
- l. SF 1164, Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business.

SECTION 3 – THE NASA TELEWORK PROGRAM

3.1 Overview

Telework is any work arrangement by which an employee performs his or her assigned duties at home or other approved worksite (i.e., alternative worksite) and not at his or her regular place of employment. Some of the advantages of teleworking include:

- Recruit and retain high-quality employees
- Improve employee morale and a better balance of work and personal lives
- Reduce commuting-related stress and costs
- Improve access for or as a reasonable accommodation for disabled employees
- Accommodate the need for convalescence from a short-term injury or illness
- Provide for the continuity of operations during national or regional emergencies
- Accommodate periods when the worksite is not usable (e.g., during office renovation)
- Assignment to a special project

Based on the recognition that the needs of an organization and an employee may vary considerably, the supervisor and employee should discuss and, if possible, agree to an arrangement that meets the organization's needs while, also, considering those of the employee. A supervisor should consider each employee's request to telework on a case-by-case basis; however, he or she should be mindful of treating all employees equitably and fairly.

An employee's telework schedule may be any of the following arrangements:

- **Full-time Telework** – All official duties are performed at an approved alternative worksite, including that which may be at a geographic location outside of the commuting area of the official worksite. Refer to paragraph 3.4, Worksites, and paragraph 3.6, Telework and Travel, for more information.
- **Part-time Telework** – Official duties are performed on a certain day(s) of the week (or pay period) at an alternative worksite and at his or her Center for the other days of the week (or pay period).
- **Temporary Telework** – Official duties are performed on an as-needed basis (i.e., there is no set schedule) at an alternative worksite or during an emergency or pandemic health crisis.

Please note that when referring to a telework schedule, any reference to full time, part time, and temporary refers to the amount of time out of his or her schedule that the employee teleworks.

Example: If an employee who is scheduled to work 40 hours per week performs 16 hours per week at an approved alternative worksite and the remaining 24 hours per week at his or her Center, that employee is on a part-time telework schedule. So this “full-time” employee is scheduled to telework “part-time.”

Any employee who participates in the Telework Program will be required to sign a Telework Agreement. Refer to paragraph 3.7, Telework Agreement, for additional information. Employees who telework must be available to work at the official worksite on telework days on an occasional basis if necessitated by work requirements. Conversely, requests by the employee to change his or her scheduled telework day in a particular week or biweekly pay period should be accommodated by the supervisor whenever practicable, consistent with mission requirements.

3.2 Eligibility and Eligibility Exceptions

3.2.1 Eligibility

Most employees are eligible to participate in the Telework Program (for exceptions, refer to paragraph 3.2.2, Eligibility Exceptions). However, an eligible employee's participation in the Telework Program is dependent upon his or her supervisor's approval. A supervisor may deny an eligible employee's request to telework when it is in the best interest of the organization to do so (e.g., based on staffing needs). In such cases, the supervisor should convey to the employee the reason for the denial. It is important to note that eligibility does not equate to entitlement.

3.2.2 Eligibility Exceptions

If an employee meets any one of the following four business-based criteria, the employee would be considered ineligible to participate in the Telework Program:

1. The employee's position requires, on a regular and recurring basis, direct handling of classified materials.
2. The employee performs onsite activities that cannot be conducted remotely or at an alternative worksite.
3. The employee's last performance rating of record was less than fully successful.
4. The employee's conduct has resulted in disciplinary action within the last 12 months.

3.3 Continuity of Operations (COOP) During National and/or Regional Emergency Situations

During an emergency situation, including a pandemic health crisis, the Telework Program will play a vital role for COOP by preserving essential Agency, NASA Headquarters, and/or Center functions and providing an option for an employee to continue working during times when the employee may be prevented from reporting to his or her official worksite.

Even though an employee may not have a Telework Agreement in place or is otherwise ineligible to telework, a supervisor may direct that employee to do so during a COOP or pandemic health crisis situation. The employee's time spent in a telework status should be appropriately documented in the Web-based Time and Attendance System (WebTADS).

For more information on COOP and how telework can play a role, please refer to the NASA Office of Human Capital Management (OHCM) Continuity of Operations (COOP)/Pandemic Desk Guide.

3.4 Worksites

3.4.1 Official Worksite

An employee's official worksite for purposes of pay (special salary rates, locality pay adjustments, and travel) is established by Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.), § 531.605(d). The official worksite of an employee teleworking on a regular and reoccurring basis must be determined on a case-by-case basis and documented in the Telework Agreement.

If an employee is required to report at least twice within a pay period on a regular basis to his or her Center, the Center is the official worksite. An exception to the reporting requirement would be when the employee's location varies on a daily basis as long as he or she is performing work within the locality pay area for that Center. Supervisors may make a temporary exception to this requirement in appropriate situations, such as when an employee is recovering from an injury or medical condition that prevents the employee from commuting to his or her official worksite. If the employee is under a Telework Agreement that does not meet this requirement, refer to paragraph 3.4.2, Alternative Worksite.

3.4.2 Alternative Worksite

Generally, any location that is conducive to performing the employee's assigned duties can be an alternative worksite. An alternative worksite may be the employee's residence or another location, such as a telework center. For additional information on telework centers, please refer to paragraph 3.4.3, Telework Centers.

The alternative worksite will not change the employee's duty station unless both of the following conditions apply:

- a. The alternative worksite is outside the locality pay of the employee's duty station.
- b. The employee is not required to report at least twice within a bi-weekly pay period to the official worksite. In such cases, the employee's alternative worksite shall then be the duty station for purposes of pay, leave, and other benefits.

3.4.3 Telework Centers

Since telework centers are a form of alternative worksite, all requirements and conditions regarding alternative worksites apply to telework centers. Advantages of teleworking from a telework center may include the following:

- a. Provides on-site technical support and full resources.
- b. Provides a more conducive work environment that sometimes may not be available in work-at-home arrangements.
- c. Provides structure that a manager may feel more comfortable with as a first step towards an employee's teleworking from his or her home.
- d. Provides a more conducive work environment that sometimes may not be available in work-at-home arrangements.
- e. Maintains a clear delineation of work and home life.

A telework center may be a facility operated by the General Services Administration (GSA); a state, local, or county government; or a private sector organization. Typically, a telework center houses employees of more than one agency and/or private sector organization. All office accommodations (e.g., desks, computers with Internet connectivity, conference areas, copy machines, fax machines) are provided based on a monthly charge. A list of the GSA telework centers and their locations is provided at <http://www.telework.gov>.

3.5 Employee Expectations and Performance Management

3.5.1 Employee Expectations

While participating in a telework arrangement, the employee continues to be bound by the NASA standards of conduct while working at an alternative worksite. In addition, it is the employee's responsibility to ensure that a proper work environment is maintained and that personal disruptions, such as non-business telephone calls and visitors, are kept to a minimum. His or her family should understand that the alternative worksite should be treated no differently than the office at the Center.

Although an employee is not to provide dependent/child care while teleworking, the employee may telework during those periods he or she is not responsible for dependent/child care activities. However, during those times the employee is providing dependent/child care, the employee must take accrued annual leave, other paid time off, or Leave Without Pay (LWOP) while performing such responsibilities.

When the employee's personal residence is the alternative worksite, NASA assumes no responsibility for any operating costs associated with the use of the employee's home, including home maintenance, insurance, or utilities (e.g., heating, electricity, water).

3.5.2 Performance Management

An employee must have at least a performance summary rating of "fully successful" (or in the case of a new employee, the expectation of such) to be eligible for or continue to participate in the Telework Program. The teleworker's performance (i.e., completion of assigned work in accordance with the performance standards in his or her performance plan) should be monitored in the same manner as that of an employee who is onsite.

It is suggested that eligibility for participation in a telework arrangement be reviewed annually in conjunction with the employee's annual performance review.

3.6 Telework and Travel

The travel provisions that apply to an employee working onsite also apply to an employee who is teleworking. Management funds all work-related travel. This includes travel to his or her home Center when both of the following provisions are in place:

- a. The employee's alternative worksite is his or her official worksite and duty station located outside the local commuting area of the Center.
- b. The employee is not required to return to his or her home Center at least twice during a pay period.

3.7 Telework Agreement

3.7.1 Initiating a Telework Agreement

Important: The employee may not telework until he or she has submitted a request that initiates the agreement process.

Prior to the commencement of a telework arrangement, the employee must submit a request to telework and complete an agreement within WebTADS. The agreement outlines the terms and conditions of the telework arrangement and prescribes the alternative worksite, telework schedule, and addresses personnel, security, and equipment issues.

The following are some of the key points to keep in mind regarding a Telework Agreement:

- The employee may only request to telework by following the procedures in WebTADS and completing the Telework Agreement. No other Telework Agreement shall be used. (To access the Telework Agreement information in WebTADS, one must log into WebTADS, click the **Leave Balances** link on the upper right side of the screen, and then scroll down to the **TELEWORK AGREEMENT REQUESTS** heading.)
- During the process of submitting the request, the employee may establish a schedule for the day or days he or she would like to telework.
- If the employee is requesting to telework due to a medical condition, the supervisor may request that the employee provide appropriate medical documentation. The medical documentation must include the expected length of duration of the condition.
- The employee's supervisor must approve the request for the employee in WebTADS.
- To limit any liability to the employee and NASA, the employee and his or her supervisor are responsible for ensuring that all regulatory, security, and Privacy Act considerations and requirements are met.
- The employee is required to record telework hours worked with the appropriate labor code and telework designation on his or her timesheets in WebTADS.

3.7.2 Terminating or Modifying a Telework Agreement

The employee's supervisor may terminate or modify the Telework Agreement via WebTADS. The employee may only request a modification to a telework agreement via WebTADS. If at any time it is determined that an arrangement is having an adverse impact on work operations or performance, the employee's supervisor will provide notice to the employee (normally two weeks) that the arrangement will be terminated. If the employee is a bargaining unit member, the supervisor should consult with the Center's Labor Relations Officer to ensure that such a change in working conditions is done in accordance with any collective bargaining agreement. If there are any questions or concerns with regards to Telework Agreements, they should be addressed with the Center's Telework Program Coordinator.

3.7.3 Supervisor Responsibilities

Supervisors shall:

1. Approve or deny an eligible employee's request to telework in a timely manner, typically within two pay periods. If the request is based on the need for accommodation due to a medical condition, the supervisor may request appropriate medical documentation including the expected length of duration of the condition.
2. Document in WebTADS, NASA's automated time and attendance system, either of the following as applicable:
 - a. The employee's ineligibility.
 - b. Denial of the employee's request to telework.

The employee's supervisor should advise the employee of the reason for either and any corrective action(s) on the part of the employee that may convey eligibility for future participation in the Telework Program.

3.8 Grievance Process

If the employee disputes the reason given by his or her supervisor for denying approval for telework or for terminating the Telework Agreement, the employee may submit a grievance using the Agency administrative or negotiated grievance procedure, as appropriate.

3.9 Time and Attendance and Work Schedules

3.9.1 Time and Attendance

The employee must ensure that he or she complies with the same time and attendance rules as his or her non-teleworking colleagues, including the procedures for requesting leave, overtime, or compensatory time.

The employee must enter telework hours in WebTADS in the same manner that he or she enters any other hours of work, but using the telework hour labor code. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that telework hours are properly annotated on timesheets prior to approving the timesheet.

WebTADS will be used to generate reports to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and Congress on the number of NASA employees participating in a Telework Program, so it is important that time is accurately recorded.

3.9.2 Work Schedules

The existing rules on hours of duty apply to teleworking employees. Together, the employee and his or her supervisor should determine the employee's work schedule, including the days and times that the employee will work in the official worksite and at the alternative worksite. The assigned telework hours can parallel those in the official worksite or be specific to the alternative worksite. Those who work an alternative work schedule, that is, a flexible work schedule or a compressed work schedule, may also telework. There is no limit as to the number of days per week or pay period that an employee may telework.

If an employee is new to NASA or the organization, the supervisor should be comfortable with the employee's familiarity with the Agency or organization before approving the employee's request to telework.

3.9.3 Overtime

The overtime provisions that apply to employees working at an official worksite apply to an employee while on a Telework Agreement. The employee may work overtime only when ordered and/or approved by his or her supervisor in advance.

3.10 Emergency Dismissal or Closing Procedures for Teleworkers

One of the major benefits of the Telework Program is the ability for the employee to continue working at his or her alternative worksite during a disruption of Government operations. If the employee is working at an alternative worksite:

- a. He or she may not be excused from performing his or her assigned duties for an interruption in operations at the official worksite (e.g., administrative dismissal, emergency closing, etc.) unless the interruption interferes with the employee's ability to complete his or her work.
- b. He or she may be excused from performing his or her assigned duties during an emergency situation if the emergency (e.g., disruption of electricity, loss of heating or cooling, loss of contact with the official worksite, etc.) adversely affects the alternative worksite and prevents continuation of work.

Depending on the situation, such as those described above, the employee may be required to report to his or her official worksite, take approved annual leave or LWOP, or be granted an excused absence. The employee should inform and discuss with his or her supervisor any change to his or her worksite which may impact his or her ability to accomplish his or her work assignments.

3.11 Telework for Employees with Disabilities

Telework provides a means to accommodate an employee with a short-term or permanent disability. GSA has prepared some very helpful information relative to the employment and accommodation of employees with disabilities, both at an alternative worksite, such as the employee's home, and at his or her official worksite.

3.12 Training

Supervisors and employees participating in the NASA Telework Program are encouraged to undertake training in telework, as experience shows that the most successful telework arrangements include initial training for both supervisors and employees. Centers may determine the best training options in this respect.

SECTION 4 – EQUIPMENT

Centers may determine the type of equipment required by a teleworker, the source of this equipment, and responsibility for its installation, service, and maintenance, subject to the paragraphs in this section.

4.1 Telecommunications Equipment

Centers have the option to use appropriated funds to install telecommunications equipment (e.g., telephone lines or broadband service) in a private residence. Centers also have the option of providing cellular phones, software, and/or computers.

4.2 Long Distance

Centers may also issue a calling card (as for telework center teleworkers) to charge long distance official calls. Alternatively, under 31 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 1348, Telephone Installation and Charges, reimbursement of long-distance (domestic and international) telephone expenses are allowed if incurred as a result of official duties. The employee must complete Standard Form (SF) 1164, Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business, and have it approved by his or her supervisor. The employee claim must be submitted with a copy of the telephone charges.

4.3 Maintenance

Maintenance of any Government-furnished equipment must be performed only by approved technicians and the employee may be required to transport Government-furnished equipment to the official worksite for repairs.

4.4 Protection from Theft and Damage

The employee must protect all Government-furnished equipment and software from possible theft and environmental damage. In cases of damage to unsecured equipment by non-employees, the employee may be held liable for repair or replacement of the equipment or software in compliance with applicable regulations on negligence. Supervisors must ensure that employees strictly adhere to all Agency and Center policies, procedures, security requirements, and property management regulations concerning the removal and safeguarding of NASA property and equipment in accordance with NPR 4200.1, NASA Equipment Management Procedural Requirements.

SECTION 5 – SAFEGUARDING OF INFORMATION

5.1 Safeguarding Using NASA Equipment

While teleworking, an employee is strongly encouraged to only use a NASA-provided computer to ensure the safeguarding of NASA's information and systems with the most recent encryption technology, antivirus protection, firewalls, etc. The use of personally-owned removable media devices (e.g., Universal Serial Bus (USB) "thumb" drives, read/write Compact Disks (CDs), external hard drives) is prohibited for use in Government-owned systems. In addition, the use of Government-provided removable media devices is prohibited for use in systems not owned by the Government.

5.2 Classified Information

Offsite access to classified information shall be strictly prohibited in accordance with NPR 1600.1, NASA Security Program Procedural Requirements.

5.3 Encryption of Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU) and Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

Any and all electronic forms of SBU information or PII shall be handled in accordance with NPR 1600.1, NASA Security Program Procedural Requirements, and all transmittal of such shall be via encryption without exception. National security information of a classified nature is not authorized and shall not be stored, transmitted, or put on the typical laptop or any ancillary storage device under any circumstance in accordance with NPR 1600.1, NASA Security Program Procedural Requirements, and shall be destroyed in accordance with NPR 1441.1, NASA Records Retention Schedules.

5.4 Loss or Compromise of SBU Information

Loss or compromise of SBU information shall be reported immediately upon discovery in accordance with Agency and NASA Headquarters/Center policy and procedures as well as in accordance with NPR 1382.1, NASA Privacy Procedural Requirements.

5.5 Breach of PII

Incidents involving the breach of PII shall be handled and reported in accordance with NPR 1382.1, NASA Privacy Procedural Requirements, as well as in accordance with Center policies and procedures.

5.6 All Records

Important: All files, records, papers, or machine-readable materials created while teleworking are the property of NASA.

Records subject to the Privacy Act may not be disclosed to anyone except those authorized access as a requirement of their official responsibilities. Centers shall ensure that appropriate physical, administrative, and technical safeguards are used to protect the security and confidentiality of such records. Only copies, not originals, of Privacy Act documents may be permitted to be taken out of the official worksite and they may be taken only on a temporary basis and not permanently stored away from the official worksite. Centers shall ensure that any teleworkers who will be working on Privacy Act materials have received appropriate Privacy Act or SBU training. Teleworkers are responsible for the security of all official data, protection of any Government-furnished equipment and property, and accomplishment of the mission of NASA at the alternative worksite.

Centers must ensure that their security or Privacy Act officials are notified if the employee will have access to sensitive or Privacy Act materials in a telework arrangement.

SECTION 6 – WORKERS’ COMPENSATION AND OTHER LIABILITIES

6.1 Workers’ Compensation

Employees who are directly engaged in performing the duties of their jobs are covered by the Federal Employees Compensation Act (FECA), regardless of whether the work is performed on the Agency’s premises or at an alternative worksite. The employee must notify the supervisor immediately of any accident or injury at the alternative worksite, provide details of the accident or injury, and complete the DOL Form CA-1, Federal Employee’s Notice of Traumatic Injury and Claim for Continuation of Pay/Compensation.

6.2 Other Liabilities

The Government is not liable for damages to an employee’s personal or real property while the employee is working at the approved alternative worksite, except to the extent the Government is held liable by the Federal Tort Claims Act.

APPENDIX A – ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronyms that are used in this desk guide are identified upon first use in this document. Thereafter, the acronym is used. In cases where the first or only instance of the use of an acronym is in a table or graphic, it may not be spelled out on first reference. Since many acronyms and abbreviations have multiple meanings, the following list includes those used in this guide and the applicable meaning:

ACRONYM/ ABBREVIATION	MEANING
CD	Compact Disk
C.F.R.	Code of Federal Regulations
COCA	Clearinghouse on Computer Accommodation
COOP	Continuity of Operations
DOL	Department of Labor
FECA	Federal Employees Compensation Act
FIRMR	Federal Information Resources Management Regulations
GSA	General Services Administration
HRO	Human Resources Office
IT	Information Technology
LWOP	Leave Without Pay
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NPR	NASA Procedural Requirements
NSSC	NASA Shared Services Center
OHCM	Office of Human Capital Management
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
PII	Personally Identifiable Information
SBU	Sensitive But Unclassified
SF	Standard Form
USB	Universal Serial Bus
U.S.C.	United States Code
WebTADS	Web-based Time and Attendance System

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