

Telework Best Practices

This is intended to address COVID-19 related circumstances that require or allow employees to work remotely instead of from their assigned workplace. Approval to telework during this outbreak is not an indication that work can effectively be performed at home under normal circumstances.

For employees:

- Create a workspace at home in a comfortable, quiet place, away from distractions and separate from living or family space. (If you are set up on the dining room table or another area where the family can interfere, it will be difficult to keep on task.) A dedicated area trains the brain to associate this place with work activities, leading to greater focus. It should be an area where all work-related materials can be stored when you are not “at work”. Make sure your family members respect your work area as a place of business.
- When creating your workspace, make it as ergonomic as possible to reduce strain on your body. Try to have a desk or table at a comfortable height, a chair that will support correct posture, and adequate lighting.
- Stick to your regular work routine as much as possible. This means starting and finishing work at the same times, as well as taking your regular lunch break. It also means doing the same activities that you normally do. For example, if you usually enjoy going for a walk outside for part of your lunch, continue doing so while working remotely. Similarly, if you like to have snacks at certain times during the day, continue doing this as well. Sticking to your usual routine will create a sense of stability, keeping you focused on what is most important: the work.
- Develop a schedule and stick to it. This is vital for managers and co-workers so that they know when they can expect to communicate and collaborate with you. It also helps your family understand when you should not be disturbed.
- For some people, putting on work clothes even when working from home can help get you into the right frame of mind. It can help you take your work seriously and stay focused.
- To combat distractions, create lists of what you want to achieve each day. Writing down what you want to accomplish for the day gives you a sense of direction.
- Trust is critical! Be available when you say you will be, ask for help when needed, and consistently deliver quality work.
- Stay connected! Communicate with your co-workers as much as you normally would, as best you can. Your availability while teleworking should be equal to in-office availability. In addition to helping you with your work, this will keep you from feeling isolated.
- Seek approval before taking home any materials that contain confidential information. Remember to exercise caution, and to maintain confidentiality even with family members.
- Remain flexible and willing to make changes to meet business and public needs.

Tools for remote work:

- Know how to check desk phone messages remotely
- Know how to change your desk phone voicemail message remotely
- Understand how to forward your desk phone number to your cell phone
- Know how to answer your desk phone using your computer’s soft phone
- Know how to use an instant messaging feature such as Skype or Microsoft Teams to communicate with team members instantaneously
- Understand how to access shared drives remotely to upload and retrieve documents

- Know how to set up an online meeting to share documents and information with meeting attendees through the shared-screen function

IT is developing a web page to provide this information – it is a work in progress so check for updates from time to time.

<https://www.maine.gov/oit/remote>

Teleworking will be subject to the following standards and expectations:

- The employee's salary, job responsibilities and benefits will not change because of involvement in teleworking.
- The employee agrees to comply with all existing job requirements and expectations while at their remote worksite.
- Normal work hours are to remain the same while teleworking unless otherwise agreed by the supervisor.
- The employee shall promptly notify the supervisor when unable to perform work assignments due to equipment failure or other unforeseen circumstances.
- During telework hours, time the employee spends caring for dependents or on other personal business will not be counted as time worked.
- The employee must gain pre-approval from management prior to using any accrued leave.