



Telework Policy

1. What are the significant differences between the new and old policy?

The major additions/changes in the new policy include:

- eliminates the two day per week restriction on telework,
- eliminates the amount of time required to report to work if called by your program on a telework day,
- adds a yearly training requirement, and
- defines who is not eligible to participate in telework.

2. I'm assigned to a non-HHS agency, may I telework?

Officers assigned to non-HHS agencies (e.g., DoD, BOP, DHS, etc.) follow the telework policies and mission needs of the organization to which detailed.

3. Does my supervisor have the final say on my telework request?

Yes. The authority to approve/disapprove a telework request is at the discretion of the supervisor or program to which an officer is assigned. Telework is a privilege extended to officers who meet the requirements of the policy and whose work assignments are conducive to completion in an off-site environment.

4. I have a verbal agreement with my supervisor to telework – Is this OK?

No. Although your supervisor may verbally OK you to telework, you must have a written agreement in place with a copy in your eOPF. This is for your protection since the agreement will outline the terms, conditions, and expectations of you while you telework.

5. Can my home be designated as my official/permanent duty station?

No. Your official duty station is always the location of the permanent government offices of the program to which you are assigned. However, your management may direct you to work at alternate locations (e.g., temporary duty/TDY) for specific duty, which includes telework assignments.

6. The federal government is closed in my area – must I telework in this circumstance?

Yes, if it is your normally scheduled telework day. If it is not your scheduled telework day and it is a regularly scheduled duty day and you are equipped to telework (e.g., access to work products and materials), then you must telework. If you are unable to telework due to lack of access, then you are excused from work. In all cases, if in doubt, check with your supervisory chain of command.

7. There is inclement weather and it's not safe to drive to work, but I was recently disciplined – may I telework in this circumstance?

No. The policy specifically excludes disciplined officers from teleworking. If the government offices are open and operating and you are unable to report for duty at your official duty station, then you would need to request, and be approved for, a day of annual leave.

8. I'm a COOP member and required to telework from home – is the government required to pay for my expenses (e.g., internet, electricity, etc.)?

No. The government is not obligated to fund expenses incurred by the officer in the performance of his/her official duties at the officer's residence. However, if you are directed to a location that is not your private residence (e.g., hotel on TDY), the government may reimburse you for certain expenses (check your program's practices and with your management chain before obligating any funds).

9. Can I be required to telework?

Generally, telework agreements are voluntary and are mutually agreed upon by the officer and management. However, an officer may be designated as performing mission critical duties (e.g., as part of a COOP team) and may be required to execute certain work functions at an off-site location. Additionally, in an emergency situation, your program may direct you to telework if warranted (see Section 6-11.g.), such emergency situations do not require a prior written agreement.

10. My supervisor wants me to come into the office on my telework day – is this permitted?

Yes. An officer may be called to respond/report at any time, including while teleworking.

11. How many days per week may I telework?

The new policy eliminates the limitation on the number of days an officer may Telework. Your supervisor/program may determine, based on their requirements and mission needs, the number and frequency that you may telework.

12. Are there limitations on the distance from my Permanent Duty Station (PDS) that I may telework?

The new policy eliminated any time/distance requirements; however, prudence and common sense must be used when selecting your telework location. It is expected that an ongoing/routine telework location is in the vicinity of your PDS (e.g., private residence) with normal commuting distances for the area. In addition, you are required to be able to report to your PDS within a normal commuting time for the area if your supervisor calls you into the office for a meeting or other reason.

13. May I conduct business meetings at my residence?

Business meetings should only be conducted via teleconference since the government assumes no liability for any injury that may occur to third parties at your residence. If a face-to-face meeting is needed, it should be performed at your permanent duty station.