



ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON TELEWORK

Q - Do I need a telework agreement before I can telework?

A - Yes, the Telework Application and Agreement Form (G-1129). If your telework site is a residence then you will also need to complete the Employee Certification of Safety Form (G-1129A).

Q - Am I required to telework?

A - No, unless telework was a condition of your employment when you were hired.

Q - What does the term "core" telework mean?

A - This is when an employee teleworks on a routine, regular and recurring basis one or more days per week. Employees can also telework on an occasional, non-routine or irregular basis.

Q - If I telework on an intermittent basis do I need a separate agreement for each telework episode?

A - No, only one agreement is needed.

Q - I'm a manager of a small HQ component and I occasionally let many of my employees work from home, but never more than one day at a time and those occasions arise spontaneously. Are those employees now required to officially file telework requests? If the answer is yes, why must I formalize a loose arrangement that is working well?

A - All employees who work from home, even occasionally, must file the application and a self-certification. This ensures comparable program compliance for all participating employees, regardless of level of use. All agencies are subject to telework reporting requirements. Additionally, we need to track this new way of working so that we can better assess our use of this program and how it meets mission and workforce needs.

Q - I work in a Service Center and submitted an application for telework but was told that a decision was made a few years ago to not allow any new employees to telework. Does the new MD change that?

A - Yes, the MD effectively lifts USCIS approach to that moratorium. Section III (B) in Appendix A states that “participation in telework is open to all eligible employees,” but that does not include, for instance, employees that have received a less than “Fully Successful” rating in the most recent performance appraisal, or employees whose conduct has resulted in disciplinary action within the last year. The MD also stresses that participation is “not an employee entitlement or right” and that “the operational needs of USCIS are paramount.”

Q - How long does my supervisor have to respond to my request to participate in telework?

A - Your supervisor should respond to your request within 30 calendar days of receipt of your telework paperwork.

Q - Can my Manager deny my request to telework?

A - Yes, Managers can deny a request to telework, based on legitimate business reasons. For example, an employee’s performance may not meet the USCIS telework MD standards, an employee’s position may not be eligible, the required government equipment may not be available, or the workgroup may not be staffed adequately to provide needed office coverage.

Q - Do I need to complete training before I can participate in the telework program? (Are we just recommending it? What training is absolutely required for teleworkers?)

A - Yes, all employees must complete Information Security Awareness Training and we recommend “Telework 101 for Employees” at www.telework.gov. If you are a Compliance Officer and responsible for on site inspections you will be required to take training through the USCIS Academy. We will announce this training schedule. This training will be available remotely, i.e., no travel will be required.

Q - If I telework am I required to come to the office at all?

A - Yes, according to our policy, employees who are teleworking must work at the traditional worksite at least 1 day during their basic workweek. OPM is issuing new guidance that will change the minimum to 1 day per pay period, and we may update our “Telework Instructional Guidance” handbook as changes take place.

Q - How can I find out if there is a Telework Center in my area?

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A - Information regarding Telework Centers can be found at http://www.telework.gov/tools_and_resources/telework_centers/index.aspx Currently, the information available relates only to Telework Centers in the Washington D.C. area.

Q - Can I telework and be on an Alternative Work Schedule?

A - Yes, Managers may approve the combined use of alternative work schedules and telework.

Q - What type of equipment will the government provide for use at the alternative worksite?

A - The equipment provided will depend upon the needs of your individual program and position. Such equipment may include a desktop computer or laptop, monitor, mouse, keyboard, printer, light pens, VPN or cryptographic card readers, power cords, etc.

Q - If Federal offices are closed due to inclement weather, are employees who telework excused from work as well?

A - Not necessarily. If the traditional worksite closes for an emergency such as inclement weather and the alternative worksite is not affected by the emergency, those teleworkers are expected to continue working unless instructed otherwise by the designated Supervisor/Manager.

Q - Do I have the right to participate in the telework program?

A - While participation in a telework arrangement is open to all eligible employees, it is not an automatic employee entitlement or right, and the operational needs of USCIS are paramount.

Q - Once I have started participating in the telework program, can my Manager make me come into the office even on the telework days listed in my telework agreement?

A - The operational needs of USCIS are paramount. Employees who have been authorized to work off-site do not have an automatic right to continue to telework. Employees participating in the program may be recalled by his/her supervisor to the traditional worksite.

Q - Once I have started in the telework program, can I stop?

A - Employees may withdraw from the program after providing sufficient advance notice so Management can plan accordingly for your withdrawal. A minimum of 14 calendar days is generally expected

Q - Can my supervisor change, e.g., modify, adjust, or terminate my telework agreement?

A - Telework agreements may be modified, adjusted, or terminated when deemed necessary by Management for legitimate business needs, including, but not limited to, externally driven requirements, security breaches, performance reasons, etc. Unless legitimate business needs/reasons dictate otherwise, Management shall provide a 14-calendar-day advance written notification before modifying or terminating a telework agreement to allow the affected employee to make necessary arrangements.

Q - Will my supervisor have to come to my residence in order for me to be approved to telework?

A - Employees who wish to telework must fill out a Form G-1129A, Employee Certification of Safety for the Telework Program. This is a self-certification by the employee that assures Management of adequate safety measures in your residence. Once you begin to telework, at some point a supervisor or management official may come to your home to verify that you are in compliance with the policy.

Q - I have a young child at home that will not interfere with me doing my work at home. As long as I get my work done, can I both care for my child and work at home?

A - No. Caring for a child during working hours is incompatible with the USCIS telework policy, and the employee must attest in his/her telework application and agreement that arrangements will be made for dependent care.

Q - How can my supervisor monitor my work performance when I am not physically present at the office?

Performance should be monitored in the same way your official work site performance is monitored - - on a results-oriented basis. This means your Manager will carefully identify the nature and objective your tasks, generally by establishing production goals, project schedules, key milestones, status reports, team reviews and regular update meetings.

If you have additional questions, please contact your local Telework Coordinator or email CISTelework@dhs.gov