



Georgia Department of Education

Policies and Procedures

Policy Title:	<i>Teleworking</i>		
Policy Number:	<i>HR-1122</i>		
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Purpose

This policy defines the Department of Education's (DOE) teleworking program, associated guidelines and rules, and associated rights and responsibilities.

Applicability

This policy applies to all employees of the Georgia Department of Education with the exception of ten-month employees of state-operated schools and employees covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Definitions

Eligible Position – A position having measurable quantitative or qualitative results-oriented standards of performance that is structured to be performed independently of others and with minimal need for support and can be scheduled with limitations on days per week or pay period to participate in teleworking without impacting service quality or organizational operations. Teleworking will not be permitted on a full-time basis. The eligibility of a position may change depending on changes in reporting, relationship, job duties, unit priority, and other circumstances. This includes all positions except ten-month employees of state-operated schools and employees covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

Eligible Employee – An employee, in an eligible position, who has been identified by the employee's supervisor as satisfactorily meeting performance standards, terms, and conditions of employment of their position. The employee must have been employed with the DOE a minimum of two months, have good attendance and shall have no active formal disciplinary actions on file for the current or immediately preceding review period. Ten-month employees of state-operated schools and FLSA-covered employees are not eligible to participate in the teleworking program.

Primary Workplace – The teleworker's usual and customary workplace.

Alternate Workplace – A work site other than the employee's usual and customary worksite (primary workplace). The alternate workplace may include the employee's home, a satellite office, or a teleworking center.

Teleworking Center – A facility that offers office-like workstations and electronic equipment that may be used by state agencies to house teleworking employees.

Teleworker – A person who, for at least one or more days per pay period, works at home, a satellite office, or a teleworking center to produce an agreed upon work product. All teleworkers must complete a standard teleworking agreement. A teleworker is not a mobile worker.

Occasional Teleworker – A teleworker, who with the approval of his/her supervisor, works at home on an infrequent basis. Approval is usually task or project specific and normally approved at least the day before the employee teleworks. Occasional teleworkers do not telework on a scheduled basis. For the purpose of this policy, occasional teleworkers are considered teleworkers.

Mobile Worker – An employee who travels continuously and whose current work location is his/her home or an assigned office. The duties of these positions generally require the employee to meet and work off-site with clients/customers who are dispersed throughout a geographic territory. For the purposes of this policy, mobile workers are not considered teleworkers.

Teleworking – Working at a location other than the employee's usual and customary workplace.

FLSA – The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) provides guidance for establishing work periods, payment of minimum wages, hours of work, overtime compensation, and required record keeping.

Office – One of the five major organizations in the DOE, such as the Office of Curriculum and Instruction, Finance and Operations, Information Technology, Policy and External Affairs, and Teacher and Student Support.

Teleworking Agreement – The signed document that outlines the understanding between the DOE and the employee regarding the teleworking arrangement.

Policy

The Georgia Department of Education (DOE) offers teleworking as a flexible work option for selected employees. Teleworking is not suitable for every employee and every job. Teleworking is a privilege and not a universal employee benefit.

While there is significant economic, personal, and production benefits of teleworking, it must be managed carefully to ensure maximum effectiveness of human capital. DOE divisions and work units may implement teleworking as a work option for certain eligible employees, based on specific criteria and procedures consistently applied throughout each Office.

Deputy Superintendents have authority to limit (partially or completely) the participation of employees in the DOE teleworking program. Department of

Education managers and supervisors may suspend/discontinue teleworking without cause at any time.

All standards of performance that apply in the primary workplace apply at alternate workplaces. All participants in the teleworking program are expected to adhere to these principles/values:

- Accessibility and Customer Service: Teleworkers must maintain regular contact with customers and supervisors. This includes and is not limited to teleworkers exhibiting high standards of communication and representation. Customer service should not suffer in any way when an employee is teleworking.
- Productivity: Teleworkers must demonstrate strong time management skills and provide documentation of work. Productivity must be measured and documented as applied to work performed at a primary or alternate workplace.
- Professionalism: Teleworkers must exhibit the DOE's core values. Teleworkers should not make light of participation in the teleworking program; jokes about teleworking can undermine the credibility of the program.

Employee Participation

Deputy Superintendents have the discretion to authorize or limit which DOE-approved flexible work options in which their divisions/offices may participate. Division directors must have approval from their respective Deputy Superintendent before any division staff can be considered for teleworking.

All teleworkers must attend mandatory training. The employee, supervisor, or manager may terminate teleworking without cause at any time. An employee's participation in the DOE's teleworking program is voluntary unless it is a condition of employment. An employee must have the willingness of his/her supervisor to perform the necessary supervisory responsibilities required for teleworking.

Employees will review their teleworking arrangement with supervisors no more than three months after initial teleworking begins. After a ninety (90) day pay period, employee and his/her supervisor must evaluate the effectiveness of the teleworking arrangement using the appropriate forms provided by Human Resource offices.

Employee salary, benefits, and employer-sponsored insurance coverage will not change as a result of teleworking. The employee shall adhere to all policies, rules, and regulations of the DOE and state while teleworking.

Work Space

A defined workspace and defined core work hours are necessary to reduce the DOE's exposure to risk, to facilitate proper management of teleworkers, and to ensure work is done in a productive environment. Office set-up guidelines are covered in training along with the Home Office Checklist form. For additional guidance on home office set-up see www.ergonomics.ucla.edu.

Work Space Self-Certification

Employees participating in teleworking must maintain a clean, safe workspace that is adequate for work and free of obstructions and distractions. The teleworker shall designate a specific workspace at the alternate workplace and will only conduct work for the DOE from that location during assigned work schedule.

An employee must verify that home facilities used for telework purposes are safe and suitable for purposes of the employee's work. The DOE will provide the employee a self-certification checklist as a condition of participation in the teleworker program. The checklist is necessary to reduce the DOE's exposure to risk and liability and provides the employee with guidelines to ensure the alternate workplace is conducive to productive work.

The DOE reserves the right to conduct an on-site inspection of the workspace as a condition of approval or continuation of teleworking. DOE officials and teleworkers may arrange for on-site visits at a mutually agreed upon time. The DOE may deny an employee the opportunity to telework if the alternate worksite is not conducive to productive work.

Any employee who participates in teleworking must agree not to conduct personal business or be involved in political activities while in official duty status in the alternate workplace. An employee's activities outside the time of work or outside the place designated for work will be deemed to be in the employee's own personal time and place, unconnected with work activities.

Equipment and Supplies

Teleworking employees must only use DOE-assigned laptops or computers in order to protect against potential security risks and to comply with Open Records Act requirements. Under no circumstances can employees access the DOE Network or Lotus Notes accounts using employee-owned computer equipment. The DOE must give written permission for use of all equipment, including but not limited to, computers, printers, and pagers. Such equipment (if available) must be checked out according to established DOE procedures and used at the alternate worksite. The DOE retains responsibility for the inventory and maintenance of DOE-owned property following state laws and procedures. Any DOE equipment used for teleworking must be returned to DOE upon termination of an employee's teleworking status. Laptops and any other necessary computer equipment may only be purchased within budgetary constraints and the approval of Internal Technology.

Department of Education Internal Technology only provides support for DOE-issued computer equipment, software, and network access. Internal Technology

does not provide support for access issues related to an employee's Internet connection. Internet connectivity is the sole responsibility of the teleworking employee.

Basic office supplies will be provided by the DOE and should be obtained during the teleworker's in-office work period. Teleworkers are expected to maintain sufficient supplies to enable them to work away from the primary workplace.

The DOE is not responsible for any expenses related to the set up and maintenance of a teleworking alternate workplace. Any expense related to Internet connectivity, maintenance changes, phone bills (except as specified otherwise herein), furniture, or other office equipment not provided by the DOE, is the sole responsibility of the participating teleworking employee.

Federal Communications Commission regulations (www.fcc.gov) apply to all phone calls made by teleworking employees while on official duty. Any department long distance calls must be made with a DOE assigned calling card. *This is still being reviewed*

Work Hours/Schedules

Each teleworker must work with his/her supervisor to develop a telework schedule that complies with the DOE's work schedule policy. The supervisor must agree in advance to any changes to the employee's work schedule in writing. To ensure appropriate office coverage and protect the credibility of the teleworking program, teleworking employees must follow established DOE procedures for requesting and taking leave.

Security/Confidentiality

The teleworker is responsible for maintaining confidentiality and security at the alternate workplace, just as the employee would at the primary work site. Teleworkers must be able to store DOE materials and information in a locked location/cabinet. The employee must protect the security and integrity of data, information, paper files, and access to DOE computer systems. All DOE policies, including the DOE Internet and E-mail Usage Policy, apply to teleworkers. All documents must be saved to the DOE Network via Virtual Private Network (VPN). Requests for VPNs must be made via Division Directors to Internal Technology.

Expenses

Travel between the home and the employee's assigned office or an approved telework center shall be considered commute time and is not subject to reimbursement.

Work-related long distance phone calls should be planned for in-office days. Teleworker employees will be issued calling cards to be used only when calls must be made from a teleworker's home or cell phone. These calling cards are used for DOE purposes only.

Liability

The employee's home workspace, when used for teleworking, is an extension of the DOE's workspace. The DOE's liability for job-related accidents will continue to exist during the approved work schedule and in the employee's designated work location. Approved teleworkers are covered under the State's Workers' Compensation Law for injuries occurring in the course of the actual performance of official duties at the alternate workplace.

If an injury occurs during teleworking work hours, then the employee shall immediately report the injury to the supervisor. The employee and supervisor should follow the DOE's policy regarding the reporting of injuries for employees injured while at work.

The State of Georgia and/or the DOE is not responsible for any injuries to family members, visitors, and others in the employee's home. The teleworker may not have business guests at the alternate workplace. All meetings should be scheduled at DOE or customer/other agency offices.

The teleworker is responsible for contacting the teleworker's insurance agent and a tax consultant and consulting local ordinances for information regarding home workplaces.

Child/Dependent Care

Teleworking is not a substitute for childcare or dependent care. The teleworker shall continue to make arrangements for child or dependent care to the same extent as if the teleworker was working at the primary workplace.

Employees on Medical Leave

Informal, short-term arrangements may be made for employees on medical leave with the consent of the employee's health care provider. Employees must provide a written physician's statement that specifically details physical limitations and length and type of work that can be performed each day prior to any work beginning.

General Provisions**Teleworking Agreement**

All DOE employees participating in teleworking must sign a quarterly teleworking agreement and participate in required teleworking training session(s). The teleworking agreement should be evaluated at least every ninety (90) days, whenever there is a major job change (such as a promotion), or whenever the teleworker or supervisor changes positions

Suspension of Teleworking

Department of Education managers and supervisors may suspend/discontinue teleworking without cause at any time.

**Authority and/or
Cross-Reference**

- HR-1108 Internet and E-mail Usage Policy
- HR-1112 Political Activity
- HR-1116 Standard and Flexible Work Schedules Policy
- HR-1120 Fair Labor Standards Act Policy
- HR-1121 Equipment Liability Policy
- WC-1602 Workers' Compensation Policy
- Form-DOE Teleworker Agreement
- Form-DOE Employee Orientation Check List
- Form-DOE Teleworker Self Assessment
- Form-DOE Certification Check List for Teleworkers