



Bureau of Economic Analysis

Telework Policy

BUREAU OF ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Telework Policy

1. BACKGROUND

Introduction

Telework, known as “telecommuting,” refers to a paid, flexible work arrangement under which employees perform the duties and responsibilities of their positions, and other authorized activities, from an alternative work environment and not the conventional office.

There are three types of telework:

1. Regular Telework - occurs as part of an ongoing schedule;
2. Ad hoc Telework - approved on a case-by-case basis, where the hours worked are not part of a previously approved, ongoing and regular telework schedule; and
3. Unscheduled Telework - when Federal/Department offices are open, but under an announcement of “Unscheduled Telework” by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) or other appropriate authority.

All employees interested in teleworking must first complete Telework 101-Employees via the Commerce Learning Center (CLC) and must enter into a written agreement with their supervisors. Supervisors of teleworking employees must complete Telework 101-Managers via the CLC prior to approving written telework agreements.

Telework is a management option rather than an employee entitlement and does not change the terms and conditions of employment. It is a tool that can provide a variety of benefits. A well-managed telework program has the potential to lead to such benefits as improved marketability of jobs to new candidates (as a more competitive and inclusive employer); reduced commuting time, which can contribute to improved quality of work-life balance; higher employee morale; cost savings in such areas as recruitment and retention of employees; improved Continuity of Operations (COOP); and reduced environmental impact.

The BEA telework program is fully consistent with the Department of Commerce (Department) Telework Policy (2014); the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010; and the Office of Personnel Management’s Dismissal Procedures for Washington, DC (2014). The DOC policy recognizes that different agencies and bureaus within the Department have different responsibilities and different work programs.

The nature of BEA’s work programs and responsibilities—producing integrated economic statistics; releasing approximately 60 sets of economic statistics each year, of which many are market sensitive; interacting with peers on complex work projects; quickly answering internal and external customer questions; and making use of company confidential data in the estimation process—make the implementation of a telework policy challenging. These issues notwithstanding, BEA is committed to implementing a policy that fully accomplishes the Bureau’s mission while reaping the benefits of telework.

Legislation

On December 9, 2010, President Barack Obama signed Public Law 111–292, the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 (Act). The general purpose of the Act is to expand telework participation. The Act is a key factor in the Federal government’s ability to achieve greater flexibility in managing its workforce through the use of telework. The Act outlines three preconditions for participation: 1) the employee is deemed eligible; 2) the employee has successfully completed the required training; and 3) the employee has an approved written agreement with the supervisor.

In addition, the Act makes a clear distinction between “eligibility” and “participation.” To participate in telework, an employee must first be identified as eligible. All employees are assumed eligible under the Act unless 1) they have been officially disciplined¹ for being absent without permission for more than five (5) days in any calendar year (the days do not have to be consecutive, just within the same year); 2) they have been officially disciplined for violations of subpart G of the Standards of Ethical Conduct of Employees of the Executive Branch for reviewing, downloading, or exchanging pornography, including child pornography, on a Federal government computer or while performing official Federal government duties² (See 5 U.S.C. §§6502(a)(2) (A)(B)); or 3) their performance does not comply with the terms of the written agreement between management and the employee (See 5 U.S.C. § 6502(b)(3)).

2. SCOPE

The provisions of this document apply to all BEA employees. The conventional office is the official duty station of an employee who teleworks.

3. POLICY

Eligible employees may work at alternative worksites away from the official workplace during an agreed-upon time during their regular workweek. All employees of the agency meeting the definition of “employee,” as defined in 5 U.S.C. § 2105, are covered by this policy, in accordance with the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010. To implement this policy to the fullest extent possible, BEA has established an implementation plan that:

- Defines “telework-ready” as employees who have successfully completed Telework 101 – Employee, have an approved telework agreement; and the required necessities to telework for their planned period of telework.
- Advises employees that although participation in a telework arrangement is voluntary, telework-ready employees on Plan B are required to work when OPM or other appropriate authority announces that Federal offices are closed.
- Outlines procedures for determining telework eligibility or ineligibility for each employee and for notifying employees of their eligibility or ineligibility to telework.
- Establishes and includes a process for approving telework arrangements (e.g., application, approval levels, timeline for approval/denial, training requirements, and written agreements).

¹ Definition of “Officially Disciplined” – A disciplinary action that results in the placement of a document in an employee’s official personnel file (OPF); the bar on telework participation remains in effect as long as the document stays in the employee’s OPF. A suspension or termination related to the items in the Act that results in a document (Standard Form 50) that permanently remains in the OPF would result in permanent prohibition in telework prohibition.

² See above.

- Identifies the process for changing or modifying telework arrangements (e.g., schedules or locations).
- States that teleworkers will receive the same treatment and opportunities as non-teleworkers (e.g., work assignments, awards and recognition, developmental opportunities, promotions, etc.).
- Requires all supervisors and approved teleworkers to sign a written telework agreement that includes a description of specific work arrangements and performance expectations.
- All teleworkers will be evaluated consistent with the bureau's expectations and performance management system.
- Requires all hours teleworked to be recorded each pay period in the electronic time and attendance system, WebTA.
- Includes a process for providing orientation and training for new teleworkers and their supervisors regarding policy requirements and responsibilities.
- Specifies how to contact the telework coordinator.
- Incorporates telework into Continuity of Operations (COOP) plans.
- Includes bureau's information technology (IT) and cyber security guidelines.
- Establishes procedures for administering and evaluating the telework program.

4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND PARTICIPATION

Telework policies and procedures apply to all offices within BEA and cover all BEA employees. Eligibility does not equate to automatic approval to telework. Telework is not an employee right. Participation is voluntary and may be terminated by the employee or employer at any time.

Exceptions - Employees who occupy positions for which telework is conducive may telework under this policy, unless they fall within the following exceptions:

1. The employee has been officially disciplined for being absent without permission for more than five (5) days in any calendar year.
2. The employee was officially disciplined for violations of the Standards of Ethical Conduct for viewing, downloading, or exchanging pornography.
3. The employee's performance does not comply with the terms of the written telework agreement.

Precluded due to Nature of Work - Employees may be precluded from teleworking if the official duties of the position require on a daily basis (every workday):

1. Direct handling of secure materials determined to be inappropriate for telework by agency head; or
2. Onsite activity that cannot be handled remotely or at an alternative worksite.

Standards of Conduct and Ethics - Employees who telework are expected to comply with all standards of ethical conduct according to 5 CFR 2635 and Departmental Administrative Order (DAO) 202-751.

Equal Opportunity - Participation in telework is open to all eligible employees without regard to race, color, gender (including gender identity), religion, national origin, political affiliation, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, genetic information, age, membership in an

employee organization, retaliation, parental status, military service, or other non-merit factors. Teleworkers and non-teleworkers will be treated the same for purposes of:

- Periodic appraisals of employee job performance
- Training, rewarding, reassigning, promoting, retaining, and removing employees
- Work requirements
- Other acts involving managerial discretion

Determining Eligibility - Approving officials authorize participation in the telework program. The approving officials are at the Associate Director level or equivalent or higher. Approving officials are responsible for documenting approval/disapproval decisions and their rationale for such decisions for each employee's request to participate in the telework program.

Approving officials will first determine basic eligibility as follows:

- Employee must work for a sufficient time to become familiar and comfortable with the assigned work and expectations. A minimum of 90 calendar days of continuous employment at BEA is considered a reasonable guideline. However, this period may be extended or shortened by the supervisor based on individual circumstances.
- Employee is full-time or part-time.
- Employee's most recent performance rating is at least 80.
- Employee's conduct is indicative of the ability to successfully work at an alternative worksite. The employee is capable of working without close supervision and has demonstrated effectiveness in setting work priorities and meeting deadlines.
- Employee must have a written agreement with the supervisor that outlines the specific telework arrangement.
- Supervisor certifies that there is sufficient, suitable work to be performed at the alternative site and quantifiable measures and deliverables have been established.
- Work does not require physical presence in the office.
- Physical absence of the employee from the conventional office must not adversely affect the ability of co-workers to perform their jobs or office operations.
- Telework cannot be used to care for elders, children, or other dependents.
- Employee must complete all required telework training prior to the approval of the written telework agreement.
- Employee must certify that the alternative workplace is safe by completing the Telework Program Safety Checklist and Self-Assessment Tool.

Suitable Work Requirements - Work suitable for telework depends on job content, rather than job series or title, type of appointment, or work schedule. The functions, duties, and tasks of positions suitable for telework typically include:

- Portable work activities that can be performed effectively outside the employee's conventional office with little or no additional cost to the organization.
- Job tasks which are measurable or project-oriented.
- Research projects/developmental assignments.

Accommodations for Employees with Disabilities - It is important to distinguish between ordinary requests to telework and requests from persons with disabilities for reasonable accommodation. Approving officials/supervisors should consult Department Administrative

Order (DAO) 215–10, Reasonable Accommodation Policy, and the Disability Program Manager, as part of the interactive process established by the Rehabilitation Act, in order to fully understand supervisors’ responsibilities under the law. As governed by Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 U.S.C. §791, and DAO 215-10, the determination as to whether an employee may be granted telework as a reasonable accommodation due to a disability should be made through the Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator, the employee’s first-line supervisor, and the employee.

5. PROGRAM OVERSIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Supervisors

The supervisor is responsible for the overall management and success of teleworking within their work units, to include day-to-day operations.

Supervisors will:

- Determine whether an employee meets basic eligibility requirements.
- Recommend an employee’s participation in telework using the criteria defined in this policy.
- Ensure that performance standards are met.
- Certify the accuracy of time and attendance reported for telework hours in WebTA.
- Periodically evaluate the efficacy of telework arrangements.
- Approve modifications to individual telework agreements.
- Maintain records of telework agreements.
- Forward copies of telework agreements to the Telework Coordinator.

Supervisors will ensure that all levels of management have approved the recommendation for telework before the recommendation is submitted to the approving official for action.

Supervisors will follow their chain of command, which includes Branch Chief, Assistant or Deputy Chief, if applicable, the Division Chief, the Associate Director or equivalent, and the Director or Deputy as appropriate.

Supervisors will clarify any assumptions, such as work location, frequency and modes of communication (e.g., email vs. telephone, core hours for contact, timeliness for returning calls), and what specific equipment will be covered by the bureau, the employee, or will be shared.

Teleworkers

Teleworkers are responsible for abiding by the terms of their telework agreements.

Teleworkers have a responsibility to be familiar with the bureau’s emergency plans (continuity plan, pandemic plan, etc.). All teleworked hours must be recorded each pay period in the official timekeeping system, WebTA. Teleworkers should report problems with their telework arrangements, ensure that information is adequately secured and protected from unauthorized disclosure, and initiate termination of their telework agreements when they can no longer abide by the terms of the agreement.

Telework Coordinator

The Telework Coordinator provides bureau-specific policy and program guidance. The Telework Coordinator will answer questions and provide guidance to employees and

supervisors as well as orientation to new teleworkers when requested. The Telework Coordinator will maintain the reporting system capturing telework participation, hours teleworked, terminations, and denials.

6. TELEWORK ARRANGEMENTS

Telework Plans - Some teleworkers might request only occasional periods of telework, while others request longer periods under regularly scheduled arrangements. Supervisors and employees have the flexibility to establish arrangements that are responsive to unique work and personal situations. BEA authorizes two telework plans, both of which must go through the formal application and approval process. These plans are:

1. **Plan A:**

- a. Ad hoc/unscheduled teleworking no more than 80 hours during a term of 12 months beginning with the initial **Plan A** telework agreement.
- b. Employee must obtain supervisory approval before performing ad hoc telework.
- c. Employees performing unscheduled telework under an OPM or other appropriate authority announcement may do so without prior supervisory permission. However, the employee must notify the supervisor in accordance with the terms of the written agreement.
- d. Employee is responsible for having and performing sufficient work for the period of telework.
- e. Employee is not required to telework when the office is closed for reasons other than Federal law or Executive Order.
- f. Employee may switch to **Plan B** at any time prior to reaching the 80-hour limit for **Plan A**, and a new agreement will be submitted to reflect this change. (Employees may not switch back and forth on a frequent basis.)

2. **Plan B:**

- a. Employees on a regular/recurring telework schedule and/or doing more than 80 hours of ad hoc and/or unscheduled telework.
- b. Employee must obtain supervisory approval before performing ad hoc telework.
- c. Employees performing unscheduled telework under an OPM or other appropriate authority announcement may do so without prior supervisory permission. However, the employee must notify the supervisor in accordance with the terms of the written agreement.
- d. Employee is responsible for having and performing sufficient work for the period of telework.
- e. Employee is required to telework when the agency/office is closed for reasons other than Federal law or Executive Order.
- f. When an employee ends up performing fewer than 80 hours of ad hoc/unscheduled telework, this does not change the employee's election of **Plan B**.

7. TELEWORKING DURING AN EMERGENCY CLOSURE

- a. Written agreements must indicate that telework-ready employees on **Plan B** are required to telework from home or an alternate worksite when their agency/office is closed for reasons other than Federal law or Executive Order.

- b. On a case-by-case basis, the supervisor may excuse a telework-ready employee from duty without charge to paid personal leave or loss of pay during an emergency if: 1) the emergency adversely affects the telework site (e.g., disruption of electricity, or network connection problems that prevent telework); or 2) the employee's duties are such that work cannot continue without contact with the regular worksite.
- c. If employees face a personal reason that prevents them from working successfully at the telework site, they must request the appropriate leave (annual, sick, compensatory, credit hours, leave-without-pay). An employee may also switch to an alternate work schedule day off or use "flexing" consistent with the employee's alternate work schedule, if any.
- d. Systems are to be in place to support telework in an emergency, including a communication process to notify COOP personnel, emergency, and non-emergency employees of the activation of the agency's emergency plan, and the agency's operating status during the emergency.
- e. Employees scheduled to telework during their regular tour of duty on a day when their agency/office is closed (or when other employees are given late arrival and/or early dismissal) are not entitled to receive overtime pay, credit hours, or compensatory time off for performing work during their regularly scheduled hours.

When a suitable arrangement is reached, the employee and supervisor must complete the following:

- Mandatory interactive telework training: Telework 101 for Employees or Telework 101 for Managers and obtain a certificate of completion.
- Telework Assessment Tool
- Telework Agreement
- Safety Checklist

Once the above are completed, the telework agreement is signed by the employee, supervisor, and the approving official.

8. TELEWORK AGREEMENTS

The written agreement provides the framework for the discussion that needs to take place between the supervisor and the employee before the employee signs the agreement.

Mandatory Requirements - Telework agreement must indicate the length of the agreement, and whether employee is electing **Plan A** or **Plan B**. All agreements must clearly inform the employee of the teleworking requirements under both **Plan A** and **Plan B**, and that a change in plan election may be made at any time during the term of the agreement (but not on a frequent basis). The agreement must set forth the expectations agreed upon by management and the employee so the employee has prior knowledge of these expectations. An employee may not be authorized to telework if performance does not comply with the terms of the written agreement.

Modification and Termination - The operational needs of the bureau are paramount and, therefore, telework arrangements may be modified, adjusted, or terminated at any time deemed necessary by management. Management has the right to end an employee's use of telework, for example, if the employee's performance declines or if the telework arrangement no longer meets the organization's needs. Management will provide at least a seven calendar-day notice before modifying or terminating a telework agreement to allow the affected employee to make

necessary arrangements. The reason for termination must be documented in a memorandum signed by the approving official and provided to the employee. Consent or acknowledgement via signature by the employee is not required for the termination of telework to take effect. The employee may request to modify the current agreement by submitting a new telework agreement indicating the requested change.

Appeals Process - Teleworkers may consult DAO-202-771 if they believe their telework request or agreement was wrongfully denied or terminated. Telework requests and agreements may be terminated or denied as long as the denial or termination decision is based on operational needs, conduct, or performance in accordance with the law and not for personal reasons. Supervisors must provide written justification to the affected employee to include information about when or if the employee would be eligible to reapply and what actions the employee should take to improve their chance of approval. Supervisors are to provide employees signed written denials or terminations of telework agreements.

9. ESTABLISHING WORK SCHEDULES

Work Schedules and Duty Hours - Employees who telework will be governed by the same policies that apply to other employees regarding work schedules and duty hours. The telework agreement must indicate the days the employee will work at the alternative worksite. Employees can work up to four (4) scheduled telework days per pay period. However, exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis. Normally, employees who telework will work the same hours they work in the conventional office; however, supervisors may structure alternative arrangements that meet the needs of the organization and participating employees. Work schedules and duty hours may be changed with the supervisor's approval and in accordance with established procedures. If the employee's telework schedule conflicts with organizational requirements, the needs of the organization will take precedence over a signed telework agreement.

Employee Availability - Based on organizational needs, the supervisor may require an employee to report to BEA on a day that would normally be a telework day. In those situations when the supervisor determines that the employee must be present at the conventional office (e.g., to attend meetings or mandatory training), the teleworking employee must comply. The intention is to provide the employee with reasonable notice to report to the conventional office. If an emergency necessitating the employee's presence at the conventional office should occur without prior notice, the employee will be granted a reasonable amount of official time to arrive at the conventional site. A reasonable amount of time takes in account the distance between the alternative worksite and the conventional office.

10. PAY, LEAVE, AND TIME AND ATTENDANCE

Premium Pay - The provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act governing overtime apply to telework arrangements. Overtime must be approved in advance to preclude any unintended liability for premium pay. Failure to obtain approval of overtime in advance may result in termination of the telework agreement or other supervisory action. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to regulate and control the use of overtime. Signing a telework agreement indicates the employee's agreement not to work or expect to be compensated for overtime work that has not been authorized and approved in advance.

Leave and Flexible Work Schedules - Policies and procedures currently in place for flexible work schedules and requesting the use of leave, compensatory time, or credit hours remain unchanged. Employees participating in telework are responsible for requesting leave in advance from supervisors.

Certification and Control of Time and Attendance - Employees are responsible for providing accurate information on time and attendance to supervisors and in WebTA. Supervisors must certify the accuracy of time and attendance to ensure that employees are paid only for work performed and that scheduled duty absences are accounted for correctly. Some approved techniques for doing so include: occasional supervisory telephone calls or e-mails to an employee during the scheduled tour of duty, and work output reviews during telework periods. The teleworking employee is responsible for validating the accuracy of time and attendance records.

Workers' Compensation - Employees who telework are covered by the Federal Employees Compensation Act when they are engaged in the performance of official duties, and they may qualify for continuation of pay or workers' compensation for on-the-job injury or occupational illness. Employees must immediately notify their supervisors of accidents or injuries that occur at the alternate worksite. Supervisors must investigate all reports as soon as possible following notification. For more information on supervisors' responsibilities in this area, consult the *Workers' Compensation Supervisors' Handbook*.

11. MANDATORY TELEWORK TRAINING

Supervisors/Approving officials - must first successfully complete the Telework 101 for Managers training program prior to approving a written telework agreement.

Employees - must successfully complete the Telework 101 for Employees training before approval of their written agreement. Upon successful completion of the course, the employee must print the course certificate and provide a copy to the supervisor. Also, all employees are required to complete IT Security and Awareness Training on an annual basis.

12. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The telework coordinator will provide the following information to the Telework Program Manager (TPM) upon request:

- a. The degree of participation by employees of each office during the period covered by the report;
- b. The method for gathering telework data in each office;
- c. The reasons for positive or negative variations in telework participation if the total number of employees teleworking is 10 percent higher or lower than in the previous year of the reporting activity;
- d. The office's goal for increasing telework participation if applicable;
- e. An explanation of whether or not the office met its established goal(s) for the last reporting period and, if not, what actions are being taken to identify and eliminate barriers;

- f. An assessment of the progress made in meeting the office's participation rate goal(s) and other goal(s) related to telework (e.g., the impact of telework on recruitment and retention, performance, etc.); and
- g. A description of best practices, if applicable.

13. FACILITIES

Alternative Home Office

- Expenses - BEA will not reimburse teleworking employees for operating costs, home maintenance, or home utility costs associated with working at home. The opportunity to participate in telework and the associated savings to the employee (resulting from reduced commuting costs and other work-related costs) are expected to offset any incidental increase in expenses.
- Safety - Employees who telework are responsible for reviewing and documenting that their home worksites comply with health and safety requirements. The Telework Safety Checklist will be used for this purpose. A telework request may be disapproved based on safety problems or the presence of hazardous materials.

14. EQUIPMENT

Use of Non-Government Computer Equipment - If an approved teleworker uses personal computer equipment at home, the employee is responsible for ensuring that the equipment is compatible with what is used in the conventional office. The employee is responsible for the purchasing, servicing, and maintenance costs associated with non-government equipment. The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) will provide technical support in implementing the remote access configurations as detailed in BEA's [*Remote Access Policy*](#).

Government-owned computer software normally should not be taken from the office for use on a personally-owned computer because it is generally copyrighted and subject to restrictive license agreements. Employees who believe they have a valid reason for an exception to this policy should seek approval from their supervisors before installing government-owned software on a personally-owned computer. Supervisors should consult with the OCIO before permitting employees to install government-owned software on a home computer.

Reimbursement for Expenses - Teleworkers must obtain supplies from those stocked at BEA offices and will not be reimbursed if they purchase them elsewhere. By participating in the Telework Program, the employee does not relinquish entitlement to reimbursement for authorized expenses incurred while conducting business for the Government. Teleworkers should request approval in advance for expenses for which they expect to claim reimbursement, and failure to do so may result in denial of reimbursement.

15. IT SECURITY REQUIREMENTS FOR TELEWORK-READY EMPLOYEES

The Department's Chief Information Officer (CIO) is responsible for issuing and maintaining information technology (IT) and e-Gov policies and minimum implementation standards, including remote access and safeguarding sensitive information. These policies and minimum implementation standards outline responsibilities of BEA's CIO as well as teleworkers to enable an effective working environment for the teleworker and the protection of Department systems from undue risk. BEA's CIO, with the support of the IT security officer, is responsible for

establishing teleworking IT security procedures specific to BEA and providing secure telecommuting resources and operational controls commensurate with the sensitivity of the data processed and with policies and minimum implementation standards provided by the Department's CIO.

Telework-ready employees must abide by the IT security requirements conveyed in the Commerce Information Technology Security Program Policy, Commerce Information Technology Requirements, Frequently Asked Questions, and BEA IT Security Policies. Telework Agreements signed by the telework-ready employees and supervisors may describe additional security requirements. If remote access is required, the employee must also follow the BEA [Remote Access Policy](#). Employees will also complete the [Remote Access Work Agreement](#) and arrange to attend a security briefing with the IT Security Officer (ITSO).

16. PRIVACY ACT, SENSITIVE, AND HIGHLY SENSITIVE INFORMATION

All employees have the responsibility to take appropriate care to ensure records subject to the Privacy Act, Sensitive Information, and Highly Sensitive Information are not shared or disclosed to anyone except those who are authorized access to perform their official duties. Misuse or release of information protected by the Privacy Act can subject an employee to fines, criminal sanctions, or both.

Company confidential and prerelease market sensitive data (electronic and paper-based) should not be physically removed from BEA or electronically removed from the BEA network. Remote access to company confidential and prerelease market sensitive data is permissible only by government furnished equipment. Remote printing or electronic transfer of this data outside of BEA is prohibited by policy and disabled via technical controls.

17. TELEWORK DURING EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Only employees who have an approved written telework agreement are eligible.

Unscheduled Telework - allows telework-ready employees to work from home or at an approved alternate location upon notification to their supervisor in accordance with the terms of the written agreement.

Offices Are Closed – employees on **Plan B** are required to telework consistent with their written agreements when Federal/Departmental offices in their local commuting area are closed. Excused absences may be granted on a case-by-case basis for telework-ready employees in the above situation.

Early Dismissal/Delayed Arrival due to inclement weather - those who are teleworking from their home are expected to work their normal work schedule; they are not dismissed from duty for any part of the workday. However, supervisors may grant excused absence on a case-by-case basis, if the employee is unable to continue teleworking.

Emergency at the Alternate Worksite - when an emergency affects only the alternative workplace for a major portion of the workday, the employee is expected to report to the conventional office, approved alternative telework site, or request supervisory approval

for leave, credit hours, or compensatory time off.

However, on a case-by-case basis, the supervisor may excuse, without charge to paid personal leave or loss of pay, a telework-ready employee from duty during an emergency if: 1) the emergency adversely affects the telework site; 2) the employee is unable to access another alternate telework site; or 3) the employee's duties are such that he/she cannot continue to work without contact with the conventional office.

18. TELEWORK DURING CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN (COOP)

In accordance 5 U.S.C. § 6504 (2), Continuity of Operations Plans supersede Telework Policy. During any period that the agency is under a continuity of operations plan, that plan shall supersede any telework policy.

If an employee is an Emergency Response Group member for COOP purposes, management, along with the employee and supervisor, should make advance and/or situational decisions as to whether the employee must physically report for duty or may work from home or an alternate worksite. For example, if the purpose of the employee reporting for duty at the traditional worksite is to provide policy guidance or to notify specific individuals of emergency requirements, this may be able to be accomplished from home, provided the employee has access to the resources necessary to perform the required services. However, in some cases, the only way to obtain the services of the employee may be through telework from an alternate worksite. For example, if inclement weather or other emergency situation results in a transportation shutdown, but phone lines remain working, the employee may be able to work from home rather than reporting to the traditional worksite or COOP site.

Employees designated as COOP Team Members may be required to telework during emergency closures or other emergencies, including pandemics, and for COOP exercises, on any day, even if that day is not a regular telework day or a day with specific approval for ad hoc telework. Telework-ready COOP employees may also be required to perform duties outside of their usual or customary duties to ensure continuation of agency-essential missions or activities.


Kathleen James
Chief Administrative Officer