



Telework Checklist for Managers

The following information is intended for Prince George's County Government managers who have employees with active, signed Telework Agreements with their agency. For more information on the Telework Program, visit ohrm.mypgc.us.

Telecommuting works best when employees and supervisors communicate clearly about expectations. The following checklist will help you establish a foundation for effective teamwork, continued productivity, and service to the Prince George's County community.

1. Review technology needs and resources.

Identify technology tools employees use in their daily work and determine whether the resources will be accessible when working from home. Ensure employees know how to access technical support should they need assistance.

- a. Ensure employees know how to access voicemail from home.
- b. Determine which platform(s) you will use to communicate as a team, clarify expectations for online availability, and confirm everyone has access to the technology tool(s) and support resources. Prince George's County employees have free access to Skype for Business, [Microsoft Teams](#), and [Office 365](#), which includes a suite of web-based productivity tools. Visit the [Office 365 training center](#) to get started or to help you maximize these resources.

2. Review work schedules.

Telework sometimes gets confused with flex work. Be clear about your expectations with employees for maintaining their current work schedule or if you are open to flexible scheduling based on employee needs.

3. Draft a work plan.

Review questions below with employees and work through answers together.

- a. What routine responsibilities/tasks cannot be fulfilled while working remotely and how will that impact operations or other people? What are ways to reduce the impacts?
- b. What routine responsibilities/tasks require regular communication and collaboration with others? Proactively contact each employee to confirm how you will communicate while everyone is working remotely.
- c. Often times employees experience fewer interruptions while teleworking. Are there any special projects or tasks that you can work on in advance while working remotely?
- d. What events or meetings are scheduled during the time in which the temporary telework arrangement is in place? Will they be postponed or canceled, or will they take place using technology? What follow-up needs to occur due to postponements or cancellations?

4. Make a communication and accountability plan.

Supervisors should tell employees how often they should send updates on work plan progress and what those updates should include. Supervisors should also communicate how quickly they expect the employee to respond while teleworking and the best ways for the employee to contact the supervisor while working remotely.

- a. Set explicit expectations.** When it comes to managing remote teams, be very clear about expectations. This is especially important now, because the "rules" of work have suddenly changed. Never leave people in the dark about projects, roles, deadlines, etc.
- b. Conduct regular check-ins.** Start each workday with a phone, video, or instant message chat. Your employees will be eager for connection and information during the disruption and the structure will help everyone create a positive routine. Every other day or weekly may be fine, so long as you are in contact frequently enough that your employees are in sync with you and/or with one another.
- c. Prioritize relationships.** Team building and camaraderie are important for any team and remote teams are no exception. Go out of your way to form personal bonds with your remote folks. Use check-in time to ask how things are going, personally. Allow team meeting time for "water cooler" conversation so the whole team can create personal connections and strengthen relationships.

5. Be positive.

A positive attitude toward teleworking and a willingness to trust employees to telework effectively is key to making such arrangements successful and productive. Teleworking presents an opportunity for managers to become better supervisors. Instead of focusing on how many hours your employees are working, re-emphasize a focus on measuring results and reaching objectives—regardless of work arrangement. The employee's completed work product is the indicator of success, rather than direct observation. By focusing on the employee's work product, managers will improve their organizational abilities and their own skill in managing by objectives.

6. Debrief when you return to the office (after normal operations resume).

Employees and supervisors should review work plans when work returns to normal, assess progress on the employee's work plan, and prioritize any unresolved or new work that resulted from temporary operational disruption.