



# Telecommuting: Best Practices for Employees

This guide is offered as a supplement to the Temporary Telecommuting Protocol and the Temporary Telecommuting Agreement. Temporary telecommuting or a flexible work schedule may be implemented in situations where “social distancing” is encouraged and where job duties support the practice.

### **Priorities and Essential Work**

Evaluate the responsibilities of your position, taking into consideration the impact on your customers and collaborators and the feasibility of completing some or all of these duties remotely. Discuss your thoughts and ideas with your manager.

### **Time and Performance**

Discuss and document your daily work schedule with your manager, including any flexibility allowed. Understand how your work will be reviewed and performance managed throughout the period of telecommuting. Duties, obligations and responsibilities of the position continue as usual during a telecommuting arrangement. You may also be directed to temporarily assist other departments with tasks that can be performed remotely. Remember to complete your timesheet, if applicable.

### **Communication and Collaboration**

Follow these suggestions for communication during a telecommuting period:

- Notify your supervisor and coworkers of any change in the telecommuting schedule
- Be available to your supervisor and coworkers by Teams, telephone and email during scheduled hours
- Return calls and emails in a timely manner
- Maintain daily communication with your supervisor
- Promptly notify your supervisor if you are unable to perform work assignments due to equipment failure or other unforeseen circumstances
- With your supervisor, develop a plan for receiving assignments, returning assignments and regular communication
- Be diligent about checking voice mail or consider forwarding your university phone to your mobile phone for a faster response

### **Work Site**

While you may not have a dedicated home office space, it is important to work in an area that allows as much privacy and quiet as possible. Be sure to factor well-being into your home office set-up.



## Human Resources

- Choose a location in the home that has limited distractions and ample natural light
- Seek opportunities to connect virtually with colleagues – Teams is an excellent remote collaboration resource allowing you to audio conference, share your screen, chat instantly, and share files
- Maintain good posture
- Take regular breaks to look away from the screen and improve circulation. Build physical movement into your day
- Stay consistent with eating, sleeping and exercise routines
- Connect peripheral devices (keyboard, mouse, headphones, monitor, etc.) to increase comfort
- Maintain boundaries to prevent over work; unplug at the end of the workday

It is important to remember that alternative work-sites are an extension of the university workspace. The university liability for job-related accidents continues during the approved telecommuting schedule and in your designated work location. In the case that an injury occurs during telecommuting work hours, you should immediately report the injury to your supervisor.

A non-exempt employee shall not work overtime without prior supervisor approval. Failure to obtain prior approval for overtime work may result in termination of telecommuting agreement and/or other appropriate disciplinary action.

The Drake University Telecommuting Policy states that remote work cannot be a substitute for ongoing child care needs. In light of COVID-19, remote work may occur while dependents are present if their school or child care is closed and alternative care is unavailable, under the following guidelines:

- Determine what can reasonably be accomplished while dependents are under your care (whether healthy or ill), and the amount of time you are able to work.
- If a dependent is ill and requires ongoing attention, you may use appropriate accrued leave as needed. In addition, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Drake sick leave may be used to care for healthy children at home due to school or childcare closures, until further notice.

### **Security**

You are responsible for the protection of university information, both paper and electronic, from unauthorized disclosure or damage. Equipment assigned by the university will only be used for university related work. Electronic files should not be stored solely on remote computers; they should be copied to university servers for back-up and retention.