



Office of Civilian Human Resources CG-121

Telework Frequently Asked Questions

I. General

1. What is telework?

- Telework is an alternative work arrangement for employees and military members to conduct all or some of their work away from the primary workplace. This concept can be applied to a variety of work experiences. Work locations might include residences, telework centers, or other acceptable locations. Telework schedules may be fixed (regular, recurring) or on an occasional (situational, ad hoc) basis. Telework is a privilege, not an entitlement, and may be withdrawn for legitimate reason.

2. What isn't telework?

- Working from home and never communicating with supervisors or coworkers
- A substitute for child or elder care
- Usually a full-time arrangement

3. Is telework training available?

- There are two telework training modules available on the Coast Guard Portal [Learning Management System](#): “**Telework 101 for Managers**” and “**Telework 101 for Employees**”. These courses meet the interactive training requirements of the Act and are required to be completed before entering into a telework agreement. Additional training resources are available on the CG LMS SkillPort Portal, search “telework.” Also OPM’s [Management Development Centers](#) offer telework training courses.

II. Employees and Military Members

1. What can employees do if their supervisor won't let them telework?

- COMDTINST 5330.4 establishes the basic guidelines for telework eligibility and the application process. Within this framework, supervisors generally have discretion to implement telework to fit the business needs of their organizations. Bargaining Unit employees are subject to provisions of any applicable negotiated agreement.

2. How do employees request to telework?

- In general, employees and military members should be prepared to make a business-based proposal for a request to telework, rather than base the request to telework on personal considerations. At the very least, in addition to describing logistics like location and frequency, employees and members should be able to discuss how they will accomplish their work without adverse effect on the organization and/or co-workers.

- COMDTINST 5330.4 requires that a written telework agreement between the supervisor and employee/military member be in place before they can begin to telework. This agreement, [CG-5330](#), available on the CG Portal, outlines the specifics of the telework arrangement (e.g., location of telework, expectations). Reservist must complete Form [CG-3307](#), also available on the CG Portal, in lieu of CG-5300, to document their participation in the telework program (a sample CG-3307 can be found at enclosure (2) of the COMDTINST). Also, employees and military members are required to successfully complete an interactive telework training program before they will be allowed to telework.

3. Are all employees and military members eligible to telework?

- Eligibility criteria are outlined by the COMDTINST and collective bargaining agreements, where applicable. The [Telework Enhancement Act of 2010](#) (the Act) requires each agency to determine eligibility for its employees. [General notice](#) of eligibility was provided to all DHS employees on June 6, 2011. Employees who are unsure or require additional information, can review the COMDTINST or contact their servicing Human Resources Specialist.
- Employees and military members may be eligible to telework if their job duties are partly or wholly portable, meaning that work can be conducted offsite without workflow or security concerns. In addition, employee or member performance will be considered, along with other factors deemed appropriate to ensure that telework does not diminish performance or agency operations. Also, the Act specifies certain limitations related to eligibility and participation that must be taken into account when making these determinations.

4. Who is responsible for approving employee and military member's request to telework?

- Their immediate supervisor must formally agree to the request. Prior to beginning telework, employees/members and their supervisors must successfully complete an interactive telework training program and enter into a written agreement.

5. If Federal offices are closed due to inclement weather or some other emergency, are teleworkers excused from work as well?

- In accordance with OPM's [Washington, DC, Area, Dismissal and Closure Procedures](#), and COMDTINST 5330.4, teleworkers are required to work when a closure, delayed arrival or early dismissal is announced. When the office is closed and the telework site is also impacted by the emergency, supervisors may exercise their authority to grant excused absence to that affected teleworker on a case-by-case basis (e.g., when power outages or network connection problems prevent telework).

6. Can supervisors deny requests to telework?

- Yes, supervisors can deny a request to telework, based on business reasons and subject to limitations on telework participation described in the COMDTINST. For example, an employee or member's performance may not meet the standards outlined in the COMDTINST or the terms of the written telework agreement. Similarly, a position may not be eligible because its official duties and responsibilities have been determined to be incompatible with telework. The denial must be made in writing, with an explanation,

and should be provided to the employee or member in a timely manner. For bargaining unit employees, collective bargaining agreements may provide measures to file a grievance about the denial or cancellation of a telework agreement through the negotiated grievance procedure. Civilian employees may check with the Workforce Relations Division (CG-1214) to discuss grievance procedures.

7. Can telework help employees and members with child or other dependent care needs?

- Telework is not a substitute for dependent care. However, telework can be valuable to individuals with caregiving responsibilities. Time saved commuting can be spent with family members, and the flexibility of being closer to home may enable caregivers to take less time off for activities like doctors' visits, school programs, etc. A teen-aged child or elderly relative might also be at home with the teleworkers, after school or during the day, as long as they are independently pursuing their own activities.

8. If employee's jobs are in one state, can they telework from a different state? What happens to the duty station if in this situation?

- There are no Governmentwide restrictions on distance for teleworkers.
- For civilian employees, teleworking from a distance may have an effect on duty station, if the employees are not physically present at their duty station at least two days in each biweekly pay period. For more information, see OPM's [Official Worksite for Location-Based Pay Purposes](#).
- Changes to official worksites affect pay. Employees whose official worksites are changed receive locality pay for the telework worksite, not the original worksite. Locality pay tables are available on the OPM [Pay Information](#) site.
- Changes to official worksite may have implications for a [Reduction in Force](#) (RIF), as the new location may be a different competitive area than the original worksite.

9. Does the agency reimburse teleworkers for any travel back to the office?

- Eligibility for reimbursement for official travel expenses is based on employees' official worksites. When employees telework, travel reimbursement from the telework location to the official duty station is not authorized. See the COMTINST for detailed information.

10. Where do employees submit telework application?

- Requests to telework and signed telework agreements should be maintained by employees and supervisors.

11. Do employees need a telework agreement before they can telework?

- Yes. COMDTINST 5330.4 mandates that a written telework agreement between the supervisor and employee be in place prior to the start of telework. This is true of all teleworkers, i.e., those who will telework on a regular and recurring basis, and those who will telework on an occasional or ad-hoc basis (also referred to as situational or episodic telework).

12. How do employees record the telework in webTA?

- Whether on a routine (regularly scheduled) or situational (unscheduled, ad hoc) telework schedule, telework hours must be documented in webTA (or applicable timekeeping system). Guidance on documenting telework in webTA can be found at the following link: www.uscg.mil/civilianHR/benefits/docs/Telework_WebTA.pdf.

III. Supervisors

1. How do supervisors know employees are working when they can't see them?

- Effective performance management is the same whether or not an employee teleworks. Supervisors should measure employee performance by results, not physical presence. Supervisors' expectations for performance should be clearly addressed in employees' performance plans, regardless of whether or not employees telework. When employees participate in telework, expectations related to accountability do not differ by virtue of the telework arrangements. Questions regarding performance management should be directed to the servicing Human Resources Specialist.

2. Do supervisors manage teleworkers differently than in-office staff?

- Supervisors should not manage the performance of teleworkers any differently than non-teleworking employees. However, telework may require some changes in communication techniques, and supervisors will need to be mindful of the ways they assign and reward work to ensure they are equitable for onsite and teleworking employees. The Act requires that teleworkers and non-teleworkers be treated the same for purposes of performance appraisal; training, rewarding, reassigning, promoting, reducing in grade, retaining, and removing employees; work requirements; or other acts involving supervisory discretion.

3. Can teleworkers follow an alternative work schedule?

- Yes. There is no restriction on teleworkers following alternative work schedules.

4. Can teleworkers schedules be different on their telework days?

- Subject to the operational needs of the organization, there is no restriction on how much flexibility may be allowed to teleworkers in this regard. Since telework eliminates commute time, it may make sense for teleworkers to begin their work day earlier than they would otherwise. However, the amount of flexibility will be determined by policy, collective bargaining agreements, and the business needs of the organization.

5. Can supervisors telework?

- Yes. In fact, best practices in telework support this. Supervisors are encouraged to promote a positive telework culture in their agencies by modeling participation in the telework program. As with any position, whether or not telework is feasible – and what kind of telework (how frequent, how regular, etc.) is most appropriate – is dependent on the business needs of the organization. See the COMDTINST for details and any restrictions.

6. If the supervisor denies an employee's telework request, can the employee appeal that decision?

- The servicing Human Resources Specialist can provide guidance about appealing a supervisor's decision

7. Do employees have a right to telework?

- No. Subject to policy, procedures, and any applicable collective bargaining agreements, management decides whether or not an employee may be permitted to telework. A decision will depend on several factors such as whether or not the duties of the position are suitable for telework, or limitations based on certain types of disciplinary action as defined in the Act.
- In addition, management has the right to review and end an employee's telework arrangement if it is no longer viable for business-based reasons, for example, if the employee's performance declines or fails to comply with the terms of the written agreement between the supervisor and the teleworking employee.

8. Is the agency required to check the safety and security of a home-based telework office?

- No, the agency is not required to visit the teleworker's home to inspect it for safety and ergonomics, although policy may establish that a supervisor or other official has the right to do so. For purposes of this guidance, COMDTINST 5330.4 includes a self-certification safety/security checklist that supervisors may ask teleworkers to complete as a proxy for an onsite visit.

9. Can an agency force employees to telework?

- No. Telework arrangements are typically voluntary. However, once employees enter into telework arrangements, it is possible that an agency may require specific employees to telework if this is clearly stated and agreed to in the written telework agreement. To avoid ambiguity, the telework agreement should specify what is expected of employees under these circumstances.

10. Who is liable for work-related injuries and/or damages at the alternative worksite?

- Employees who suffer work-related injuries and/or damages at the alternative worksite are covered under the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees Claims Act, the Federal Tort Claims Act, or the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (Workers' Compensation). Non-appropriated fund civilian employees, are covered under the Longshore and Harborworkers' Compensation Act.

12. Are business phone calls from the home reimbursable?

- Yes, employees may receive reimbursement for business-related long distance phone calls made on their personal phone. Public Law 104-52, title VI, Sec. 620 provides for reimbursement of telephone calls approved by the supervisor. The employee should submit a Standard Form 1164 through appropriate channels to receive the reimbursement.

13. What role do unions play?

- Agencies should allow pre-decisional involvement to the fullest extent practicable as provided in Executive Order 13522 and satisfy collective bargaining obligations by working with labor when developing their telework policies and agreements.

IV. Information Technology

1. What Information Technology (IT) hardware and software will the employee need at the home-based worksite?

- All requirements, including hardware and software, for Common Access Card Remote Access Service (CACRAS) and Outlook Web Access (OWA) are listed on the TISCOM CGPortal Page under 'Service Catalog', then 'CAC-RAS.'
<https://cgportal2.uscg.mil/units/tiscom/SitePages/Home.aspx>
- In general for CACRAS:
 - Computer running Windows Operating System (XP, Vista and Windows 7. Windows 8 is not currently supported).
 - Internet access (wired or Wi-Fi)
 - Common Access Card (CAC) reader
 - CISCO Virtual Private Network (VPN) software
 - ActiveIdentity ActiveClient software
 - CAC reader drivers
 - DOD root certificate installer software
- In general for OWA:
 - Windows or Mac computer
 - Internet access (wired or Wi-Fi)
 - CAC reader
 - ActiveIdentity ActiveClient software
 - CAC reader drivers
 - DOD root certificate installer software
- Please note, not all telework requires the full suite of technology options listed above. For example, a teleworker whose tasks include reviewing or writing documents, or other tasks that can be accomplished offline, may not necessarily need to use the remote desktop protocol (RDP) or may only need OWA. Use of technology, such as collaboration and content management tools like the CG Portal (SharePoint), which does not require RDP, is encouraged.

2. Who do employees contact if they experience IT problems while Teleworking?

- For problems with the VPN Client please contact the OSC Help Desk at 1-800-821-7081
- For issues with Outlook Web Access (OWA) please contact TISCOM 1-800-847-2479 (opt 3.).
- For problems with Remote Desktop, Standard Workstation, Coast Guard issued laptops, CAC Reader/Software/Cards- please contact the Centralized Service Desk at: 1-855-CGFixIT

4. Can employees use their home internet connection for Telework?
 - Yes. If using a Wi-Fi signal for the Internet connection, the Wi-Fi router must be configured to use Wi-Fi Protected Access 2 (WPA2) security protocol per Commandant Instruction 2010.2A, [Use Of Unclassified Wireless Devices, Services, and Technologies](#).
5. Can employees use a wireless mouse and keyboard?
 - A wireless mouse is approved. Wireless keyboards shall not be used for Telework functions because the signal can be intercepted and the information typed can be stolen.
6. Why is a network connection so slow?
 - Network connectivity may be slow at times due to the lack of an adequate connection speed. This is usually caused by the local Internet Service Provider (speed of service on the home internet access plan) or by the number of devices connected to the home's network (smartphones, game consoles, tablets, additional personal computers, etc.).
7. What is the benefit of using a CG-provided workstation over a personally-owned one?
 - CG provided workstations are preloaded with the standard image and applications suite. Due to this fact, employees do not need to connect to a CG Standard Workstation via a Remote Desktop Connection when teleworking, thus requiring a slower connection speed.
 - Employees are able to work offline on standard documents and their offline email account even when connection is slow or unavailable.
8. Is anti-virus software needed on personally-owned computers used for telework?
 - Yes. Antivirus software is required. Employees can take advantage of the McAfee Home Use Program.
 - Via DHS Home Use Program: <http://www.mcafee.com/epppb/dhs>
 - Via DISA Home Use Program: https://patches.csd.disa.mil/CollectionInfo.aspx?id=496&bc=213_1_15_asc
9. Who is responsible for maintaining and servicing equipment used at the alternate work site?
 - If the computer is a Coast Guard Standard Workstation, then all service requests are submitted through the CGFIXIT program.
 - If the computer is a non-standard workstation, then the employee's unit is responsible.
 - Personal computers and equipment is supported by the employee and the Government has no obligation to provide funding necessary to support personally owned equipment.
10. How do employees obtain a CACRAS account?
 - Employees need unit approval to obtain CACRAS accounts. Accounts are requested through CGFIXIT. There are several steps necessary to obtain an account, to include reading policy and completing a memorandum. CACRAS accounts required the employees' unit to provide charge back funding on an annual basis to fund the CACRAS service.

Questions or comments regarding Coast Guard Telework may be submitted via email to:
cgtelework@uscg.mil.