

General

What is telework?

The term “telework” refers to paid employment performed away from the principal office, either at home or at an alternative work site.

What types of jobs or tasks are adaptable to telework?

Generally, a job or tasks which are portable and can be performed effectively outside of the office without diminishing individual or organizational performance.

Does an employee have a right to telework?

Telework is a benefit and **not** an entitlement. The appropriateness of an employee’s participation will be determined by considering whether the employee meets the eligibility criteria as set forth in FRTIB’s Telework Policy.

What should a supervisor consider before approving a teleworking arrangement?

The supervisor should examine both whether the position is eligible for telework and whether the employee is eligible to telework. Specifically, the supervisor must consider:

Position eligibility:

- Does the position require physical presence on a daily basis?
- Does the position include any portable or administrative work that can be accomplished from an alternative office or location?
- Does the position require access to materials or specialized equipment on a daily basis that cannot be moved from the traditional worksite or accessed outside of the traditional worksite?
- Does the position require access to systems, networks, or applications that cannot be accessed outside of the traditional worksite?
- Would performance of position duties at an alternative worksite result in a measurable decrease in the level of service?

Employee eligibility:

- Has the employee demonstrated a high level of dependability and the ability to handle responsibility without the need for close supervision?
- Is the employee currently performing at a “Meets Expectation” level or above
- Does the employee have a disciplinary record?

Can a supervisor participate in the Telework Program?

Yes, provided the supervisor meets the eligibility requirements and is approved by his/her manager.

What if a supervisor believes the telework arrangement is not working out?

Supervisors may terminate or modify a telework arrangement when:

- The employee no longer meet the eligibility criteria for participating in the program;
- There is a change in the employee's work requirements that makes a telework arrangement impracticable;
- The employee demonstrates a pattern of unavailability or inaccessibility while teleworking, or;
- For other legitimate business reasons.

Where can I be physically located when I telework?

Your telework agreement approves your management approved alternative work-site(s). You are required to submit a Health and Safety Checklist for your alternative work-site(s). If you are going to work at a location other than your approved work-site(s) per your telework agreement, you must get it approved by your supervisor, notify HRD and submit a Health and Safety Checklist for the new alternative work-site. NOTE: Public settings, such as a coffee shop, restaurant, or library, would not be approved as an alternative work-site(s).

What is the teleworker's official duty station?

The teleworker's official duty station will remain FRTIB's headquarters in Washington DC. All pay, special salary rates, leave, and travel entitlements are based on the official duty station. Note: Approved remote teleworkers are excepted from this general rule.

If I participate in regular recurring telework, am I required to change my Mass Transit or Parking subsidies?

Yes. You are required to notify the Mission Support Branch/ORM of mass transit subsidy modifications or of parking subsidy modifications if you are teleworking on a regular recurring basis.

Are employees required to take telework training prior to participating in telework?

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Yes. All employees must take FRTIB-approved telework training. Employees completely new to telework must complete telework training prior to beginning to telework. The Human Resources Division will announce when telework refresher training for existing teleworkers are required.

If one of my regularly scheduled telework days falls on a Holiday does it automatically mean the day after the Holiday is my telework day?

No. You must obtain approval from your supervisor to switch your telework day under these circumstances.

Who is liable for work-related injuries at the alternate work site?

Employees who suffer work-related injuries while performing official duties at an alternative worksite are covered under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (*i.e.*, Workers' Compensation). The employee should immediately report any work-related accident that occurs at the alternative worksite to the supervisor and HRD.

Types of Telework

What is core telework?

A core telework day falls into one of the two categories identified below:

- Scheduled Day - Telework that occurs on an agreed upon day(s) of the week. (e.g., employee teleworks every Tuesday.)
- Floating Day - Telework that occurs with an agreed upon frequency (e.g., once per week, three times per month, etc.) but not always on the same day(s) of the week, pay period, or month (*i.e.*, the employee is permitted to telework one day per week, but the day of the week “floats” depending on the employee’s weekly schedule.)

Employees approved for core telework may, with supervisory approval, establish a telework schedule of up to two (2) days per week.

What is situational telework?

Situational telework is telework that is approved on a case-by-case basis, where hours worked were not part of a previously approved, core telework schedule (e.g., inclement weather, doctor appointment, or special work assignment). Each instance requires prior written supervisory approval (e.g., via email).

Split-situational telework allows an employee to work in the office part of the day and telework for the remainder of the day when approved by supervisor. Each instance

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requires prior written supervisory approval (e.g., via email). Commute time between the office and the employee's alternative work site must not be considered "duty time" and the employee must account for that time by using leave, use of lunch break, etc.

There is no limit on the number of days for those using situational telework, provided prior supervisory approval is obtained and workload permits.

Can an employee be approved for situational telework and core telework?

Yes. An employee should make sure to check both situational and core telework boxes on the Telework application if an employee is interested in applying for both.

What is Medical Telework?

Telework that is approved for an agreed upon period, granted in no more than three month increments, because the employee or the employee's family member suffers from a temporary illness or injury. This type of telework is appropriate only if the illness or injury requires the employee to stay at home or close to home and does not affect the employee's ability to perform his or her regular work assignments and the employee provides medical documentation to support the arrangement. A supervisor may approve medical telework arrangements of up to five days per week. Medical telework is only permitted for up to one year per single medical event and is subject to the approval process provided in the Telework Procedures.

What is unscheduled telework?

Unscheduled telework is associated with an operating status announcement (e.g., inclement weather) that allows an employee who is on a Telework Agreement to request to use situational telework, instead of requesting unscheduled annual leave.

Employees who wish to participate in the unscheduled telework option may do so provided they are on an approved Telework Agreement and have communicated their intent to their supervisor. The supervisor may determine that the employee does not have portable work capable of being accomplished on that day or the amount is not sufficient to account for a full tour of duty. In that case, the supervisor will communicate his/her determination to the employee and coordinate other arrangements for the employee's duty status.

Is every Federal employee eligible to perform unscheduled telework?

No. There are a number of factors that could keep an employee from participating in unscheduled telework (e.g., nature of the work, classified materials, and internal infrastructure limitations).

Can an employee be forced to perform "unscheduled telework"?

No. Unscheduled telework gives a telework employee the option to choose to telework when OPM announces that the Federal Government in the Washington, DC, area is operating under an announcement of OPEN WITH OPTION FOR UNSCHEDULED LEAVE OR UNSCHEDULED TELEWORK.

If I want to change my core telework day to a different day of the week for one particular week do I have to change my telework agreement?

No. A temporary change of your core telework day can be accomplished by an e-mail request to your supervisor and an e-mail approval from your supervisor.

To permanently modify a Telework Agreement, you must complete the Telework Agreement form checking the box "Modification of Existing Agreement" and submit the completed form to your supervisor for approval. If approved, your supervisor will send a copy of the modified Telework Agreement to the Telework Coordinator, for recordkeeping purposes.

Can I request a situational telework day on the actual day I want to telework or do I have to request it the day before?

Approval of a request under these circumstances is at the supervisor's discretion.

Schedules and Leave

Can an employee use FRTIB approved alternative work schedules (e.g., 5-4/9) along with telework?

Yes. Supervisors may approve the combined use of alternative work schedules and telework.

If an employee works overtime at the alternative worksite but that overtime was not authorized, should a supervisor take action to prevent this from happening again?

Yes. The supervisor should warn the employee in writing that she/he may not work unauthorized overtime, and will not be paid for the hours worked.

The day before a holiday management excuses employees from work two hours prior to their departure time, in which the absence is charged to administrative leave. If an employee is teleworking on that day should he/she also receive administrative leave for two hours?

Yes.

Must an employee who is authorized to telework request advance approval from the supervisor to use leave?

Yes. Anytime an employee is not performing official duties while teleworking, he/she must be on leave.

Performance and Accessibility

How is performance monitored while an employee is teleworking?

While teleworking, employees work is subject to review and status updates by any means deemed appropriate by the supervisor. The frequency and timing of review is solely subject to supervisory discretion. Employees on telework are required to complete all assigned work according to standards and guidelines detailed in the employee's performance plan and/or communicated to the employee by their supervisor.

What about the impact on the team when some employees are working at home?

Certain guidelines must be established to minimize any adverse impact on other staff members before employees begin to work at home. The overall requirements of the office must take precedence over working from home. A supervisor may require an employee to work at the main work site on a day scheduled for working from home if the needs of the team so require. Telework should not put an additional burden on staff remaining in the office.

How accessible must a teleworker be while teleworking?

During work hours, the teleworker must be available for emails and telephone calls and is expected to return calls promptly, with the same regularity with which co-workers confer in the normal office setting.

Dependent Care

Is telework a solution to child or other dependent care issues?

No. Dependent children or adults who are cared for by persons other than the employee while the employee is teleworking must remain in those situations during the entire tour of duty that day. If a situation arises where the employee must attend to a dependent, or address other personal issues during the telework scheduled duty hours, the employee must immediately notify the supervisor and arrange to take leave.

If an employee is teleworking and his/her child is sent home from school due to illness, must the employee take leave?

Yes, the employee must take leave for the time spent caring for his/her child because she or he is no longer performing official duties.

Equipment and Expenses

Will the employee be reimbursed for utility expenses associated with an alternate work site?

No. FRTIB assumes no responsibility for the teleworker's expenses related to heating, electricity, water, high speed internet connection, and/or space usage.

Are there restrictions on the use of the FRTIB owned equipment, software or information at an alternative work site?

Yes. FRTIB owned equipment can be used for official purposes only. Teleworkers must adhere to all rules, regulations, and procedures relating to security and confidentiality of work-related information and data.

Can I get a laptop to keep at home for telework purposes so I don't have to transport it back and forth to work each day?

Employees will not be issued a second laptop (i.e., one for the office and one for their alternative worksite) unless an exception is approved by management (e.g., reasonable accommodation, emergency employee).

Privacy

I am working remotely, and I may have disclosed personally identifiable information (PII), or sensitive information, lost a thumb drive, or laptop, what do I do?

FRTIB employees and contractors are required to immediately report any suspected or actual breaches involving the theft, lost or unauthorized disclosure of PII, sensitive information or an information system device.

How do I report a suspected or actual breach?

You should immediately report any suspected or actual breaches to abuse@tsp.gov. You should not delay reporting suspected breaches to investigate the cause of the breach or whether it actually occurred.

Can I remove documents containing PII and sensitive information from FRTIB?

You may only remove copies of documents containing PII or sensitive information from FRTIB with prior authorization from your supervisor. To obtain permission, and to keep track of these documents, please email your supervisor or manager, requesting to remove documents. In the email, you should state the date the documents are removed, description of the documents, and the date you expect to return the documents. You should only remove the minimum amount of information you need to perform a particular task, and you must reasonably protect all PII and sensitive information, regardless of the medium on which it is stored or transmitted.

Information Security/Occupational Health & Safety

Is it okay for me to telework at a coffee shop, restaurant, library, etc, if I connect to a public Wi-Fi or use a personal hotspot using the FRTIB VPN?

For the IT security and privacy reasons noted below, it is not recommended. For the Occupational Health and Safety reasons noted below, it is not permitted.

- **IT Security:** While a virtual private network (VPN) gives you online security and anonymity by creating a private network from a public Internet connection, it remains best practice to use a private home Wi-Fi network that requires a password, so that any data transmitted while you work is protected.
- **Privacy:** If you are conducting FRTIB business on your laptop in a public setting, such as a coffee shop, it can be viewed by others. This could expose sensitive or confidential information to the public.
- **Occupational Health and Safety:** Your telework agreement approves your alternative work-site(s). You are required to submit a Health and Safety Checklist for your alternative work-site(s). Public settings, such as a coffee shop, restaurant, or library, would not be approved as an alternative work-site(s). If you are going to work at a location other than your approved work-site(s) per your telework agreement, you must get it approved by your supervisor, notify HRD and submit a Health and Safety Checklist for the new alternative work-site.

What if I am on FRTIB approved travel, is it okay to connect to the hotel Wi-Fi using the VPN?

Yes. Most hotels have password protected Wi-Fi networks. For the privacy concerns noted above, you should ensure that you are conducting work in a private setting like your hotel room. When you are on FRTIB approved travel, it is a management approved location, so you do not need to notify HRD of your alternative work-site.