

Q: What are the enhancement to the Telework program?

A: Employees will be eligible to telework up to 3 days per week (5-4/9 or Maxiflex will need to ensure they have 2 scheduled workdays in the office each week). There will be one agency-wide engagement day every week on Wednesdays, where everyone must plan to be in the office and not be teleworking. Teleworking employees may telework when they need to unexpectedly care for a dependent. They will need to account for work and non-work hours during their tour of duty and take appropriate leave (paid or unpaid) to account for time spent away from normal work duties.

Q: What if I take leave one day during the week, can I still telework 3 days during that week?

A: That is up to your supervisor. Your supervisor has the discretion to approve it, but also has the discretion to disapprove it. You should work out your schedule with your supervisor and request approval if you want to telework 3 days during a week when you take leave one day.

Q: What if there is a holiday during the week, can I still telework 3 days during that week?

A: That is up to your supervisor. Your supervisor has the discretion to approve it, but also has the discretion to disapprove it. You should work out your schedule with your supervisor and request approval if you want to telework 3 days during a week when there is a holiday.

Q: Can I telework 3 days per week and also take a situational telework day?

A: That is up to your supervisor. Your supervisor has the discretion to approve it, but also has the discretion to disapprove it. Remember situational telework days are not intended to be regular or recurring.

Q: What if I am on a 5-4/9 schedule, can I still telework 3 days per week the week that I have my AWS day off?

A: No, AWS and Maxiflex employees need to have a regular schedule where they will be in the office no less than 2 times per week.

Q: Can a supervisor deny a request for a floating telework schedule and have their team all be on core telework?

A: Yes, a supervisor can require employees to be on core telework instead of floating day telework for legitimate business reasons (e.g. office coverage).

Q: Can an employee ask for AWS day off on Wednesday?

A: No, an employee cannot schedule their AWS day off on the agency-wide engagement day.

Q: What is the camera policy? What happens if I don't follow it?

A: Cameras are required to be on, with employee faces visible, except one-on-one meetings and very large/presentation style meetings (like the Agency All-Hands). Telework is not an entitlement. Failure to follow a telework rule could result in suspension and termination of an employee's telework agreement. If an employee fails to follow the camera policy while in the office, they can be subject to progressive discipline just like they could for failing to follow any other agency policy.

Q: Can supervisor require employee to turn on camera from one-on-one meeting?

A: Yes, if it is important to the supervisor that they see the employee's body language and expressions for a particular one-on-one meeting they can require an employee to turn on their camera.

Q: If you are meeting with FRTIB contractors and not other FRTIB employees, does the camera policy still apply?

A: Yes, if you are an FRTIB employee in a duty status doing FRTIB work, you must have your camera on whether the contractor does or does not, unless the meeting is one-on-one or very large/presentation style.

Q: Do I have to change my transit subsidy if I am approved to telework 3 days per week? When and how do I do that?

A: Yes, you will need to change your transit subsidy if the number of days you are teleworking will change. You can contact Mission Support for instructions on how to make the change.

Q: How do I apply for 3 days per week? If I am on medical telework do I wait to request it?

A: There was a telework modification form that was released on May 9th. All employees were required to complete the form, have their supervisor sign it and submit it to HRD. For those on medical telework, they should complete the modification form requesting the normal telework arrangement wanted after their medical telework expires.

Q: Can my supervisor deny my request to telework 3 days per week? What can I do if he/she does?

A: Yes, telework is not an entitlement. Supervisors can deny the request for legitimate business reasons. If that happens, employees can grieve the denial through the administrative grievance process.

Q: Do engagement days apply to all offices or can an office “opt out” of an engagement day?

A: Wednesday is an agency-wide engagement day per agency policy. Offices cannot “opt out” of it. It is required for all employees, with limited exceptions.

Q: Can my supervisor require me to come into the office on another day of the week that is NOT a Wednesday (e.g., monthly staff meeting on a Tuesday)?

A: Yes. Telework is not an entitlement. Supervisors can require you to come into the office on another day of the week that is NOT a Wednesday.

Q: Can I request leave on Wednesday?

A: Yes, you can request leave on a Wednesday.

Q: What will happen if a holiday falls on a Wednesday?

A: If a holiday falls on a Wednesday, the agency will designate another day of the week as the agency engagement day. You will have ample notice of that day. There are no federal holidays that fall on a Wednesday until 2024.

Q: Can I request a situational telework every Wednesday?

A: No, situational telework is not for regular recurring telework. You may not request situational telework every Wednesday. You can request situational telework on a Wednesday if you have an unexpected situation that warrants it and your supervisor approves it.

Q: If I am on medical telework, do I have to come in on Wednesdays?

A: Medical telework is not a legal right. It is a policy that permits supervisors to grant up to 5 days per week for medical reasons relating to the employee or the employee's family member for a temporary illness or injury. Therefore, supervisors can require employees to come in every Wednesday or a particular Wednesday while they are on medical telework if they have a legitimate reason to do so.

Q: If I have telework as a reasonable accommodation, do I have to come in on Wednesdays?

A: Reasonable accommodations are only for the employee (not for a family member) and is a legal right for employees determined to be qualified individuals with disabilities. The decision on whether the person does or does not need to come in on Wednesdays will depend on the accommodation granted by the Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator, which involves the interactive process between the employee, the employee's health care provider, the employee's supervisor and the Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator.

Q: If I have a young children, can I plan to have them stay home with me regularly on my telework days and just account for the time I don't work with leave?

A: No, the dependent care flexibility only applies to situations where a dependent is unexpectedly home.

Q: For the time periods that I need to care for my child, can I be granted administrative leave or do I have to use my own leave?

A: You have to use your own leave. Administrative leave cannot be granted. We were able to use an exception under regulation that allowed us to grant

administrative leave during the early part of the pandemic for childcare, but that is no longer available.

Q: If the government closes for inclement weather and my child's school is closed, would I be eligible for weather and safety administrative leave for the day or does this new policy change that?

A: No, since we are changing the policy to allow employees to telework when a dependent is at home, under OPM's weather and safety leave guidance, an employee would be expected to account for work and non-work hours during his or her tour of duty and take their own appropriate leave (paid or unpaid) or other paid time off to account for the time spent away from normal work-related duties. We cannot grant weather and safety leave.

Q: If I telework and I don't carry my computer back and forth to the office, do I have to take my own leave if I leave my computer at work and the government closes, or do I get weather and safety leave?

A: It depends whether there was a reasonable expectation of the inclement weather. Typically, a note is sent out from HRD regarding imminent inclement weather reminding employees to take their laptops home.

Q: When kids are home during a snow closure and there is no power, do we use leave?

A: If you have no power due to weather events, it is beyond your control, and you can be granted weather and safety leave.