

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
DEPARTMENTAL PERSONNEL MANUAL LETTER**

DPM LETTER NO. 368 -1

SUBJECT: Telecommuting

DATE: APR - 1 1994

I. General

This DPM Letter outlines the policy and procedural requirements for telecommuting in the Department of Transportation (DOT).

Telecommuting means flexibility in the work location. Telecommuting is an innovative management tool that provides employees with the opportunity to perform their work at alternative work sites during a portion of the workweek. Telecommuting locations may include working at home or working at another location such as a telework center or satellite office.

II. DOT Policy

- A. The Secretary of Transportation has determined that DOT will serve as the leader for the Federal community in the implementation of programs that reduce traffic congestion and improve the quality of life for our employees. Telecommuting is one such program that has the potential to provide significant transportation-related public benefits in this decade and to fundamentally change the way we do business in DOT. Traffic congestion places large costs upon the community, its environment, its commerce, and its workers. Reduction of this congestion will bring benefits in terms of dollars and quality of life, both in the community and for our employees. Telecommuting is consistent with our agency's mission, will assist in meeting the needs of our customers, and will serve as a valuable tool in recruiting and retaining a quality workforce.
- B. DOT Operating Administrations, the Office of the Inspector General, and the Office of the Secretary shall establish and evaluate a telecommuting program to test and advance the state of knowledge of telecommuting.
- C. Telecommuting programs may be implemented for bargaining unit employees only after appropriate labor relations obligations have been fulfilled.
- D. Telecommuting programs must be implemented in such a manner as to have no adverse impact on organizational mission and functions. Each program must meet the minimum requirements specified in Appendix A. Each telecommuting program shall be evaluated consistent with the criteria contained in Appendix B of this DPM.

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- E. If, at any time, it is determined that a telecommuting arrangement is having an adverse impact on work operations, the program shall be modified or terminated immediately, subject to fulfilling labor relations obligations.
- F. Participation in telecommuting by employees and supervisors shall be voluntary. Supervisors shall be responsible for determining if a position is appropriate for telecommuting and for selecting employees to participate.
- G. Each telecommuting program shall be conducted in such a way that managers, supervisors, and employees fully understand that new and different work requirements accompany flexible work arrangements. The success of each telecommuting program will depend to a very large degree upon the joint commitment of managers, employees, and their representatives to ensure the telecommuting program is conducted in the optimal way to meet the work needs of the organization and the personal needs of employees.

III. Reporting Requirements

Summary reports on the use and projected use of telecommuting shall be submitted to the Secretary of Transportation, via the Assistant Secretary for Administration, from the Head of Each Operating Administration, the Inspector General, and the Assistant Secretary for Administration, on behalf of the organizations in the Office of the Secretary, as follows:

- 30 days after issuance of this DPM
- Quarterly progress reports thereafter

IV. Telecommuting Benefits

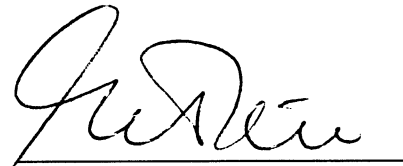
Telecommuting has the possibility to fundamentally change the way we now do business in DOT. Telecommuting can:

- Promote and incorporate technology in solving transportation problems.
- Decrease traffic, parking congestion, energy consumption, and air pollution by reducing the number of commuters.
- Protect and improve the environment.
- Reengineer positions and create new job opportunities so individuals may work at home more effectively because of temporary or permanent disabilities or because of family or personal demands.
- Generate new businesses between the Federal and private sector by establishing telework centers in communities located far beyond the traditional metropolitan boundaries.

- Improve employee productivity by providing a block of work time free from distractions and interruptions.
- Improve competitiveness in recruiting and retaining high quality employees.
- Improve quality of employee worklife and morale.

V. Departmental Contact

Questions regarding this policy may be addressed to Gail Batt of my staff on 366-9448.



Director of Personnel

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

TELECOMMUTING

Program Requirements

I. Program Establishment

The objectives for establishing a telecommuting program must be clearly defined and communicated to employees and managers.

II. Program Approval

Telecommuting programs which comply with this DPM may be approved by the Head of the Operating Administration or Departmental Officer, or his/her designee.

III. Program Control and Oversight

Each telecommuting program must provide for specific controls and administrative oversight to prevent any adverse impact to the work of the organization. Program control and oversight must assure, at a minimum, that there is no adverse impact on service to the public or work productivity and that there is no increase in operating costs.

It must be noted that implementation of telecommuting, as with most new and innovative programs, will involve some additional resources for start-up, transition, and maintenance. It is anticipated, however, that these short-term expenses will be offset by the long-term benefits of telecommuting listed in Section IV. Telecommuting Benefits, of this DPM Letter. Any decision to implement, modify or terminate a telecommuting should consider a balance between the short-term costs and the long-term benefits of telecommuting.

IV. Training and Technical Assistance

Opportunities to attend training/orientation sessions should be provided for both managers and employees before participating in a telecommuting program. Telecommuting requires a new approach to work by both management and employees that is very different from traditional methods.

Telecommuting programs will not succeed if conducted in the manner of "business as usual." The central focus of telecommuting training shall be to ensure that managers and employees fully understand that the success of each telecommuting program will depend largely on the establishment of a joint employee/management commitment to success.

V. Written Agreements

A written agreement such as the sample provided in Appendix C is recommended when an individual telecommuting arrangement is established.

VI. Labor-management Relations

Prior to initiating, modifying, or terminating a telecommuting program which affects employees in a collective bargaining unit, appropriate labor relations obligations must be fulfilled.

Program Evaluation

I. Evaluation Goals

The National Performance Review (NPR) report states that ---

DOT should implement a telecommuting program for its employees and evaluate transportation-related and other topics requiring research Telecommuting has pervasive effects throughout organizations which must learn to manage work forces that are geographically dispersed. Experience so far has been limited, but there are applications that can be studied and the results disseminated. The case studies will advance the state of understanding of the potential for telecommuting, particularly its potential to affect transportation demand and air quality. The studies will also contribute to understanding the many factors influencing the potential for telecommuting. No estimates of the cost effectiveness of telecommuting are available ... Telecommuting has significant but unknown potential to reduce public costs such as maintaining and operating highways and decreasing air pollution. The case studies will aid in developing an understanding of the potential for telecommuting which will assist organizations, managers, and employees in understanding how to plan for telecommuting and how to anticipate the public and private costs and benefits of telecommuting.

Consistent with the intent of the NPR, each telecommuting program conducted in the Department of Transportation shall be evaluated as described below.

II. Evaluation Points

There will be 3 separate evaluation points:

- At implementation (background and preliminary data)
- After six months
- After twelve months

III. Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation criteria shall address the following:

Transportation Mode Change

- For each participating individual, what was the previous mode of transportation (single occupant car, carpool, transit, walk/bike)?
- What was the actual distance and travel time to the worksite?

Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)/Environmental Changes

- How did work trip VMT change?

- How did non-work VMT change?

Promoting Sprawl

- If the telecommuter only had to go to the office twice per week, how likely would it be for him/her to move further out?

Supervisor/Employer Satisfaction

- How satisfied was the employee's supervisor?
- Identify problem areas, e.g., telecommunications technology, supervision, time and attendance, attitude of co-workers, costs/savings, productivity, scheduling meetings.

Employee Satisfaction

- How satisfied was the employee?
- Identify issues areas, e.g., telecommunications technology, space, equipment, socialization, co-worker attitude, work time flexibility, family time.

Employee Problems

- If the employee had problems, what were they (personal, equipment, legal, insurance, transportation on non/telecommute days, relationship to co-workers)?

Supervisor/Employer Cost Effectiveness

- What additional costs did the employer have (equipment, services)?
- What benefits did the employer gain (productivity, parking/office space reduction, office sharing, equipment sharing, employment of persons with disabilities, etc.)?

Employee Cost Effectiveness

- What additional costs did the employee experience?
- What additional benefits did the employee gain (family time, increased productivity, reduced expenses for commuting/lunches/clothing)?

**Sample Agreement
Between DOT and Employee Approved to Work Offsite**

(Organization) _____ (Employee) _____

Voluntary Participation

Employee voluntarily agrees to work at the approved alternate workplace indicated below and agrees to follow all applicable policies and procedures. Employee recognizes that such an arrangement is not an employee benefit but an additional method the agency may approve to accomplish work. Employee and agency agree to try out the arrangement for a minimum of 3 months unless unforeseeable difficulties require earlier cancellation.

Salary and Benefits

Working at an alternate worksite is not a basis for changing the employee's salary or benefits.

Duty Station and Alternate Workplace

Employee's official duty station is: *[specify city and State]*

Employee's approved alternate workplace: *[specify street and number, city, and State]*

Note: All pay, leave and travel entitlements are based on the official duty station.

Official Duties

Employee will perform official duties only at the official duty station or agency-approved alternate workplace. Employee agrees not to conduct personal business while in official duty status at the alternate workplace, for example, caring for dependents or making home repairs.

Work Schedule and Tour of Duty

Unless the agency and employee agree otherwise, the number of hours the employee is scheduled to work will remain the same. Employee's official tour of duty will be: *(specify days, hours, and location, i.e., official duty station or alternative workplace).*

Time and Attendance

Employee's timekeeper will have a copy of the employee's schedule. The supervisor will certify bi-weekly the time and attendance for hours worked at the official duty station and the alternate workplace. *(Note: Agency may require employee to complete self certification form.)*

Leave

Employee will follow established office procedures for requesting and obtaining approval of leave.

Overtime

Employee agrees to work overtime only when ordered and approved by the supervisor in advance. Working overtime without such approval may result in termination of the telecommuting privilege and/or other appropriate action.

Equipment/Supplies

Employee will protect any Government-owned equipment and will use the equipment only for official purposes. The agency will install, service, and maintain Government-owned equipment. The employee will install, service, and maintain any personal equipment used. The agency will provide and/or reimburse the employee for all necessary office supplies and also reimburse the employee for business-related long distance telephone calls.

Security

If the Government provides computer equipment for the alternate workplace, the following security provisions apply: *[insert applicable provisions]*

Liability

The Government will not be liable for damages to an employee's personal or real property while the employee is working at the approved alternative workplace except to the extent the Government is held liable by the Federal Tort Claims Act or the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees Claims Act.

Work Area

The employee will provide a work area adequate for performance of official duties.

Worksite Inspection

The employee agrees to permit the Government to inspect the alternative workplace during the employee's normal working hours to ensure proper maintenance of Government-owned property and conformance with safety standards. *(This may require employees to complete a self-certification safety checklist.)*

Alternative Workplace Costs

The Government will not be responsible for any operating costs that are associated with the employee using his or her home as an alternative worksite, for example, home maintenance, insurance, or utilities. However, the employee does not relinquish any entitlement to reimbursement for authorized expenses incurred while conducting business for the Government, as provided for by statute and implementing regulations.

Injury Compensation

Employee is covered under Federal Employee's Compensation Act if injured while actually performing official duties at the official duty station or the alternate duty station. The employee agrees to notify the supervisor immediately of any accident or injury that occurs at the alternative workplace. The supervisor will investigate such a report immediately.

Work Assignments

Employee will complete all assigned work according to procedures mutually agreed upon by the employee and the supervisor and according to guidelines and standards in the employee's performance plan.

Performance

In order to work at an alternative workplace, employee's most recent performance rating should be at least "fully successful." The supervisor may require regular progress reports from the employee to assist in judging performance. A decline in performance may be grounds for canceling the alternative workplace arrangement.

Disclosure

Employee will protect Government/agency records from unauthorized disclosure or damage and will comply with requirements of the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 USC 552a.

Standards of Conduct

Agency standards of conduct continue to apply to employees working at alternate worksites.

Cancellation

After appropriate notice to the supervisor, the employee may resume working his or her regular schedule at the official duty station. After appropriate notice to the employee, the agency may instruct the employee to resume working his or her regular schedule at the official duty station, for example, if the employee's performance declines or if the project fails to benefit organizational needs. Agency must follow any applicable administrative or negotiated procedures.

Other Action

Nothing in this agreement precludes the agency from taking any appropriate disciplinary or adverse action against an employee who fails to comply with the provisions of this agreement.

(Employee's Signature and Date) _____

(Supervisor's Signature and Date) _____