



**GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
Human Resources Policy #111**

TELEWORK

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References: [Department of Administrative Services Statewide Telework Policy](#)
DHS Human Resources Policy #106 – Assignment of Duties
DHS Human Resources Policy #1201– Standards of Conduct and Ethics in Government

Telework is an authorized work arrangement, where work is performed at an approved location other than the employee's primary DHS workplace, known as the alternate worksite or telework site. This may include the employee's home or a satellite office. Telework may be used as a recruitment and retention tool, while providing positive impact on the environment, traffic gridlock and urban sprawl.

SECTION A: GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Successful teleworkers have the support of their supervisors and are approved based upon the suitability of their position. Employees may be allowed to telework when there are tangible benefits to the department and all expectations of the position are fully met. In order for telework to be considered, the job responsibilities of the position must be satisfactorily performed from the primary workplace.
2. Teleworkers must be mindful of the image presented, when teleworking. They must not be involved in activities during the workday that will reflect negatively on the department. Examples include, but are not limited to, working in the yard, shopping at the mall, being involved with secondary employment activities, etc.
3. Telework is a privilege not a universal benefit or employee right. The duration of an employee's ability to telework is entirely at the will and discretion of the department, which retains the prerogative to determine the time, place and manner of employment.
4. An employee's participation in telework is usually voluntary. The employee's manager/supervisor or authorized official may terminate telework at any time; however, advanced notice should be given, when feasible. Issues regarding the approval of telework are not appealable, grievable, or subject to review.

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5. Every teleworker must have a signed **Telework Self-Assessment** (Attachment #2), **Telework Workspace Self-Certification** (Attachment #3), **Telework Application** (Attachment #4), **Telework Agreement** (Attachment #5) and **Telework Property Removal Form** (Attachment #6) on file with their manager/supervisor and the Agency Telework Coordinator.
6. The Telework Agreement must be updated, whenever substantial changes are made such as:
 - a. **A major job change (e.g. promotion).**
 - b. **Teleworker or their manager/supervisor change positions.**
 - c. **Any portion of the arrangement covered by the agreement changes.**
7. Telework must be renewed on a rolling annual basis.
8. Telework must be added to the employee's Performance Plan. Teleworkers remain under the Performance Management Process and will be evaluated in the same manner as non-teleworking employees.
9. Random audits may be conducted to evaluate accountability and the success of the telework program.
10. Employee benefits (including leave and holidays) are not impacted by telework. Teleworkers must follow established departmental policy relating to leave approval.
11. Continuous teleworkers must have an established work schedule, with a start time, end time, a meal period of at least 30 minutes and identified break periods. Occasional teleworkers will discuss their work schedules with their manager/supervisor, on an as needed basis.
12. Teleworkers must be accessible in some manner (e.g. work cell, email, etc.) to their manager/supervisor, customers and coworkers during the agreed upon work schedule regardless of the work location.
13. Teleworkers may be asked to report to the primary workplace on scheduled telework days, if circumstances warrant.

SECTION B: ELIGIBLE POSITIONS

Positions most suitable for telework will have the following characteristics.

1. Infrequent face-to-face interaction with clients.
2. Communication can be managed by telephone, email, and facsimile.

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3. Generally works alone handling or preparing information (e.g., researching, writing, composing reports, developing procedures, creating documents, analyzing statistical data, etc.).
4. Responsibilities have clearly defined results.
5. Measurable duties with objectives that have identifiable timeframes and checkpoints.
6. Responsibilities are content versus process oriented.
7. Most tasks require concentration and/or large blocks of time to complete.
8. Telework would not negatively impact service quality or organizational operations.
9. Work can be performed without close supervision.
10. Minimal requirement for special equipment.

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Unless an exception is granted, employees must meet the following criteria to be eligible to telework.

1. Position is suitable for telework.
2. Position does not require access to material(s) that cannot be removed from DHS offices.
3. Requires minimal or no special equipment to perform their job duties.
4. Employed with DHS for at least six (6) months.
5. Not currently involved in any type of corrective or disciplinary process. Examples include being on a work or attendance plan. Please note you may be dismissed from telework, if it is determined its being used inappropriately.
6. Have no record of misconduct or disciplinary action in the last 12 months
7. Has consistently met established performance standards and received a minimum overall rating of "3", which is a Successful Performer, on the most recent performance evaluation.
8. Self-motivated, works independently, and is responsible.
9. Knows and understands the policies and procedures that govern their work.

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10. Familiar with the requirements of their position.

11. Requires minimal supervision and feedback.

SECTION D: APPLICATION PROCESS & EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Teleworkers must be knowledgeable of the provisions of this Telework Policy and the **Telework Guidelines** (Attachment #1).
2. Determine a dedicated telework site consistent with the requirements of this policy, the Telework Guidelines (Attachment #1) and the Telework Workspace Self-Certification (Attachment #3).
3. Employees applying for telework must submit the following documents to their manager/supervisor for approval and signature.
 - a. **Telework Self-Assessment (Attachment #2)**
 - b. **Telework Workspace Self-Certification (Attachment #3)**
 - c. **Telework Application (Attachment #4)**
4. The manager/supervisor has **five (5) business days** from the date of submission to approve or deny the Telework Application.
5. If approved, the employee must complete the following forms and provide to their manager/supervisor for signature. Employees are also required to complete the online telework training course.
 - a. **Telework Agreement (Attachment #5)**
 - b. **Telework Property Removal Form (Attachment #6)**
 - c. **Provide the Online Telework Training Certificate of Completion to manager/supervisor.**
 - d. **Manager/supervisor is required to submit Attachments 2 through 6 and the Online Telework Training Certificate of Completion to the Agency Telework Coordinator at dhs.teleworkcoordinator@dhs.ga.gov.**
6. If denied, the manager/supervisor must provide a written justification on the Telework Application **within five (5) business days** of receipt. Telework denials must be business related. The explanation should outline any steps the employee can take to be eligible for reconsideration. This decision is final and is not appealable, grievable, or subject to review.

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7. There is a 90-day probationary period, when an employee is initially approved for telework. Prior to the conclusion of the probationary period, a review should be conducted by the teleworker's manager/supervisor to determine, if telework is the best work arrangement.
8. The Telework Agreement must be reviewed, when there is:
 - a. **A major job change (e.g. promotion).**
 - b. **Teleworker or their manager/supervisor change positions.**
 - c. **Any portion of the arrangement covered by the agreement changes.**
9. When any modifications are needed, a new Telework Agreement must be completed and signed. The new agreement must be sent to the Agency Telework Coordinator.
10. If the teleworker changes their telework site, they must complete a new Telework Workspace Self-Certification (Attachment #3) and submit it to their manager/supervisor for review and approval. This must also be forwarded to the Agency Telework Coordinator.
11. Establish work practices to ensure a successful telework experience.
12. Report to department worksite for meetings, training, etc., as required by the manager/supervisor.
13. Determine any federal, state, or local tax implications regarding working at home and satisfy any personal obligations. DHS will not provide tax guidance or assume any additional tax liability. Employees are encouraged to consult with a qualified tax professional to discuss income tax implications.
14. Ensure the telework site fully complies with all applicable local ordinances, zoning requirements and neighborhood association guidelines (e.g. community/subdivision covenants).
15. Comply with all provisions of this policy, the Telework Guidelines, the Telework Agreement and all other terms and conditions of employment.
16. Telework must be renewed on a rolling annual basis. Employees must follow the process, as outlined in this section for annual renewal.

SECTION E: MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Managers and supervisors must be knowledgeable of the provisions of the Telework Policy and the Telework Guidelines (Attachment #1).

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2. Objectively consider each employee's telework request.
3. Determine if telework is beneficial to the department and employee.
4. Ensure adequate staffing for the unit before approving telework.
5. Ensure employee meets the eligibility requirements listed in Sections B and C of this policy.
6. Ensure that performance can be adequately measured, and sufficient work exists for the employee to be productive at the alternate worksite before authorizing telework.
7. Ensure adequate measures are in place to protect confidentiality and information security at the alternate worksite.
8. Employees applying for telework must submit the following documents to their manager/supervisor for approval and signature.
 - a. **Telework Self-Assessment (Attachment #2)**
 - b. **Telework Workspace Self-Certification (Attachment #3)**
 - c. **Telework Application (Attachment #4)**
9. The manager supervisor has **five (5) business days** from the date of submission to approve or deny the Telework Application.
10. If approved, the employee must complete the following forms and provide to their manager/supervisor for signature. Employees are also required to complete the online telework training course.
 - a. **Telework Agreement (Attachment #5)**
 - b. **Telework Property Removal Form (Attachment #6)**
 - c. **Provide the Online Telework Training Certificate of Completion to manager/supervisor.**
 - d. **Manager/supervisor is required to submit Attachments 2 through 6 and the Online Telework Training Certificate of Completion to the Agency Telework Coordinator at dhs.teleworkcoordinator@dhs.ga.gov.**
11. Retain a copy of Attachments 2 through 6 for all employees approved to telework and send a copy of all of these items to the Agency Telework Coordinator signed by both the manager/supervisor and the employee.

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12. Provide the employee with a copy of all the forms submitted.
13. Managers and supervisors must complete the online training course through LMS prior to the employee beginning telework. The certificate of completion should be sent to the Agency Telework Coordinator.
14. If the request to telework is denied, the manager/supervisor must outline the reason for their decision on the Telework Application and provide it to the employee within **five (5) business days** from the date of submission. Telework denials must be business related. The explanation should outline any steps the employee can take to be eligible for reconsideration. This decision is final and is not appealable, grievable, or subject to review.
15. Retain a copy of the denial application and send a copy of **Attachments 2 through 4** to the Agency Telework Coordinator signed by both the manager/supervisor and the employee.
16. There is a 90-day probationary period, when an employee is initially approved for telework. Prior to the conclusion of the probationary period, a review should be conducted to determine, if telework is the best work arrangement.
17. The Telework Agreement is to be reviewed, when there is:
 - a. **A major job change (e.g. promotion).**
 - b. **Teleworker or their manager/supervisor change positions.**
 - c. **Any portion of the arrangement covered by the agreement changes.**
18. When any modifications are needed, a new Telework Agreement must be completed and signed. The new agreement must be sent to the Agency Telework Coordinator.
19. If the teleworker changes their telework site, they must complete a new Telework Workspace Self-Certification (Attachment #3) and submit it to their manager/supervisor for review and approval. This must also be forwarded to the Agency Telework Coordinator.
20. Telework must be renewed on a rolling annual basis. Employees should follow the process, as outlined in Section D of this policy for annual renewal.
21. Maintain an inventory of state-owned equipment at the employee's telework site.

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22. Prepare an amendment to the employee's Performance Management Plan, specifically detailing responsibility areas and standards of performance pertaining to the terms of the Telework Agreement.

SECTION F: FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT (FLSA)

1. FLSA non-exempt employees must obtain approval from their supervisors before performing overtime work. Failure to do so may result in the termination of their Telework Agreement and/or corrective or disciplinary action.
2. Both **Exempt and Non-Exempt FLSA employees** will be required to complete a **Telework Activity Log (Attachment #8)** to record assignments performed, while teleworking. The form or an electronic version is to be submitted to the manager/supervisor on a weekly basis. The manager/ supervisor does have the discretion to request this information more frequently.

SECTION G: AGENCY TELEWORK COORDINATOR

1. Telework will be managed by the Office of Human Resources. A named Agency Telework Coordinator will oversee the telework program.
2. The Agency Telework Coordinator will ensure compliance with the procedures, agreements and guidelines outlined in this internal policy and the statewide telework policy.
3. The Agency Telework Coordinator is the liaison for the Statewide Telework Coordinator.
4. All employees who are authorized to telework must have the following documents on file with the Agency Telework Coordinator, prior to the commencement of Telework.
 - a. **Telework Self-Assessment (Attachment #2)**
 - b. **Telework Workspace Self-Certification (Attachment #3)**
 - c. **Telework Application (Attachment #4)**
 - d. **Telework Agreement (Attachment #5)**
 - e. **Telework Property Removal Form (Attachment #6)**
 - f. **Online Telework Training Course Certification of Completion**

SECTION H: EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

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1. Although a variety of circumstances may affect individual situations, the principles governing administrative leave, dismissals and closings remain unchanged. The ability to conduct work (and the nature of any impediments), whether at home or at the office, determines when an employee may be excused from duty.
2. If the Governor orders a statewide closure or within certain geographic regions, employees who are scheduled to telework on those days will not be required to telework. This guideline also applies to a departmental wide closing or county closings by the DHS Commissioner. If you are **Essential Personnel**, you will be required to report to your designated workplace.
3. When an emergency only affects the telework site (e.g. power outage, etc.), the teleworker is expected to report to the regular office or request supervisory approval of annual leave, comp time, leave without pay, etc.
4. When a teleworker knows in advance of a situation that would preclude working at home, the employee must either come to the conventional office or request leave.

SECTION I: USE OF STATE-OWNED EQUIPMENT

1. All maintenance of state-owned equipment will be performed by an authorized DHS technician and may be conducted at DHS headquarters or at a Division approved site.
2. Personally owned software may not be used on state-owned equipment. Any and all software installed on state-owned equipment must be appropriately licensed.
3. All expenditures (e.g. laptops, monitors, printers, desks, file cabinets, chairs, etc.) except general office supplies, must have prior approval of the respective DHS Division or Office.
4. Office supplies will be provided to the teleworker by DHS and should be obtained during the teleworker's in office work period. DHS will not reimburse teleworkers for out-of-pocket supplies normally available in the office.
5. DHS may also give written permission for certain equipment to be checked out and used at the alternate worksite. This equipment remains the property of the State and the department retains the responsibility for the inventory and maintenance of state-owned property following State laws and procedures. Employees are not authorized to use state-owned equipment for personal use.
6. Issues relating to connectivity of state-owned equipment and security of information are subject to required standards of the Office of Information Technology. **All systems MUST be password protected.**

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7. If a piece of equipment that is vital to work performance breaks, needs repairs or otherwise becomes inoperable, the teleworker may be asked to report to the office until the equipment is fully functioning and usable.
8. Transfer of state-owned equipment to and from the office and telework site is the responsibility of the teleworker.
9. The employee's telework site is subject to department audits and security reviews as appropriate.
10. The employee and their supervisor will complete and sign the **Telework Property Removal Form** (Attachment #6) prior to the commencement of telework.
 - a. The teleworker's supervisor will use the Telework Property Removal Form to maintain an inventory of state-owned equipment at the employee's telework site.

SECTION J: USE OF EMPLOYEE-OWNED EQUIPMENT

1. Teleworkers may use their own equipment (e.g. fax machine, printer, copier, etc.) provided that no cost is incurred by DHS. All expenses (e.g. maintenance, repair, insurance, etc.) is the responsibility of the employee.
2. DHS does not assume liability for loss, damage or wear of employee-owned equipment.
3. If a teleworker uses their personal computer, DHS files must be kept on a separate disc or jump drive. All discs or jump drives must be password protected.
4. Software which is not appropriately owned by or licensed to DHS or the teleworking employee may not be run, if DHS data resides on the computer or if the computer accesses a DHS network.
5. All DHS information must be properly secured. The teleworking employee and their supervisor should consult with IT to establish and implement an appropriate information security protocol.
6. If a piece of equipment that is vital to work performance breaks, needs repairs or otherwise becomes inoperable, the teleworker may be asked to report to the office until the equipment is fully functioning and usable.

SECTION K: WORKSITE SAFETY AND LIABILITY

1. Teleworkers are expected to perform their duties and responsibilities at the telework site at the same level, as if they were in the conventional office and work for the entire time period scheduled.

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2. Teleworkers must keep their alternate worksite free from hazards, as well as avoid distractions and obligations that will impede a productive workday.
3. The teleworker's designated workspace must meet the Occupational Safety and Health Administration rules for the workplace including: smoke detectors, working fire extinguisher, unobstructed exits, removal of hazards that could cause falls, adequate electrical circuitry and appropriate furniture.
4. The employee must verify their telework site is safe and suitable by completing the **Telework Workspace Self-Certification** (Attachment #3). If it is not, telework may be denied.
5. DHS reserves the right to inspect the telework site to ensure safety compliance and adherence with the telework program requirements regarding space and furnishings.
6. DHS assumes no liability for any injuries to teleworker's family members, visitors or others at the employee's alternate worksite. Teleworkers may not have business guests at the alternate worksite or any other location except DHS offices. Use of the telework site for work-related meetings is prohibited. Teleworkers are encouraged to utilize teleconferencing, if a work-related meeting becomes necessary.
7. DHS is not responsible for any loss or damage to the teleworker's real property or any structures attached thereto. This includes, but is not limited to, any personal property owned by the teleworker or any of the teleworker's family members; or property of others in the care, custody or control of the teleworker or any of the teleworker's family members.
8. The teleworker is responsible for contacting their agent or tax consultant and consulting local ordinance, restrictive covenants and applicable neighborhood association guidelines for information regarding home workplaces.
9. Individual tax implications, auto insurance, homeowners insurance, and utility costs are the responsibility of the teleworker.

SECTION L: WORKERS' COMPENSATION

1. The employee's alternate worksite is considered an extension of their DHS workspace. When the employee is performing official duties in the designated work area of the telework site during their designated work hours, they will be covered by workers' compensation. Please note, attending to personal comfort needs is not considered performing official duties.
2. For purposes of workers' compensation coverage, the teleworker's "designated work hours" are the hours specified by the employee on their **Telework Agreement** (Attachment #5) and the "designated telework site" is the area specified by the employee on their **Telework Workspace Self-Certification** (Attachment #3).

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Employees and supervisors must take care to describe workspace and work hours on the appropriate forms to avoid confusion over workers' compensation coverage.

3. DHS assumes no liability for injuries occurring at the teleworker's alternate worksite outside the agreed-upon work hours and/or outside the agreed-upon designated workspace. The teleworker must report on-the-job injuries to their supervisor, as soon as possible after the accident/injury occurs. Also submit supporting medical documentation of the accident/injury to their supervisor, as soon as such documentation becomes available.
4. If necessary, teleworkers shall permit the appropriate DHS representative to access the telework site to investigate an injury report.

SECTION M: DEPENDENT CARE

1. DHS offers telework with the understanding that it is the employee's responsibility to ensure that a proper work environment is maintained. The employee and their family must understand that the designated workspace is an area set aside for the employee to work. Family responsibilities must not interfere (to the extent controllable) with work time.
2. Telework is not a substitute for dependent care. Employees must continue to arrange dependent care, to the same extent as if they were in the conventional office.

SECTION N: CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SECURITY

Security of confidential information is of primary concern and importance. Teleworkers, like all State employees, are expected to adhere to all applicable laws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures regarding information security. All data assets (e.g. equipment, software, and confidential information) used, while teleworking are subject to these security policies.

Divisions allowing employees to access records subject to the Privacy Act from an alternate worksite must maintain appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to ensure the security and confidentiality of such records. Security and confidentiality protection measures shall be discussed between the employee and their supervisor.

To help ensure confidentiality and information security the teleworker will:

1. Be responsible for maintaining confidentiality and security at the alternate worksite, as the teleworker would at the primary workplace. The teleworker must protect the security and integrity of data, information, paper files, and access to

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agency computer systems. DHS internet and technology use policies apply to telework, as they would in the primary workplace.

2. Safeguard confidential information maintained in files, in computers, on jump drives, etc. When the hard drive of an alternate worksite computer is inoperable, arrangements must be made to remove sensitive information from the hard drive prior to the computer being serviced. This procedure must be followed regardless of whether the computer is owned by the employee or DHS.
3. Ensure software is virus inspected and each laptop or PC used by the teleworker has virus protection software installed.
4. Return all materials (e.g. paper documents, jump drives, etc.) containing confidential information to the office worksite for proper handling or disposal.
5. Adhere to copyright law by not copying or sharing any State-owned software utilized by teleworkers.
6. Back up critical information, as necessary to assure the information can be recovered, if the primary source is damaged or destroyed.
7. Ensure that confidential information is not disclosed to an unauthorized source.
8. Immediately notify your manager/supervisor, IT, and the Agency Telework Coordinator of any suspected or actual security violation.
9. Understand that adherence to the above is an essential requirement of the Telework Program. Failure to comply with these provisions may be cause for termination of telework and/or corrective or disciplinary action.
10. All external drives, jump drives, and laptops are to be password protected.

For additional information or assistance regarding telework, please contact the Agency Telework Coordinator at dhs.teleworkcoordinator@dhs.ga.gov.