

	ITEM 609	PAGE 1
BUREAU OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES	SUBJECT BCSS GUIDE TO TELEWORKING DURING COVID-19	DATE 04-2020 PR 20-07

Table of Contents

6090	PURPOSE	1
6091	GOVERNANCE	1
6092	COVID-19 TELEWORK EXPECTATIONS	1
6093	TIPS FOR TELEWORKING	2
6094	TECHNICAL SUPPORT PLAN	3
6095	NOTICE REGARDING IN-PERSON APPOINTMENTS	4
6096	SCRIPTS FOR CUSTOMER CORRESPONDENCE	4

6090 PURPOSE

In light of the COVID-19 crisis, the Department of Health and Human Services authorized and issued necessary equipment to allow most BCSS staff to work remotely, i.e. from home, during the crisis and until further notice. Deployment of required equipment initiated on March 23, 2020. The following provides structure and guidance for staff while teleworking. Any needs or questions that are not addressed in this guidance must be brought to staff supervisor's attention promptly.

6091 GOVERNANCE

NH Governor's Executive Order Declaring State of Emergency, March 13, 2020,
<https://www.governor.nh.gov/news-media/orders-2020/documents/2020-04.pdf>

NH Governor's Emergency Orders,

<https://www.governor.nh.gov/news-media/emergency-orders/index.htm>

NH DHHS COVID-19 <https://www.nh.gov/covid19/index.htm>

NH Department of Administrative Services, Division of Personnel – Telework Technical Assistance Manual, May 15, 2009

NH Department of Administrative Services, Division of Personnel policies and protocols related to COVID-19

NH DHHS Human Resources policies

BCSS CSM Item 605 Confidentiality

6092 COVID-19 TELEWORK EXPECTATIONS

Telework during the COVID-19 is temporary. BCSS Administration will inform staff of plans for transition when regular business from offices resumes. The following are expectations for all BCSS staff during COVID-19 teleworking:

1. Work hours remain the same as prior to staff teleworking, unless otherwise authorized by your supervisor.
2. Participate in any scheduled "check-ins" as directed by your supervisor.
3. Existing policies and procedures for leave requests and usage apply.
4. Attend all scheduled conference calls/meetings.

	ITEM 609	PAGE 2
BUREAU OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES	SUBJECT BCSS GUIDE TO TELEWORKING DURING COVID-19	DATE 04-2020 PR 20-07





5. Correspondence with customers by staff direct e-mail is still prohibited.
6. In the event you experience difficulties with VPN to access the state network, you may still access your work e-mail account, **only** from your state-issued device. Staff must not use their personal devices to access work e-mail, per federal regulations and BCSS policy.
 - a. Use the following URL: <https://owa.nh.gov/owa> to access the Outlook Web Access (OWA) option.
 - i. Your credentials are as follows: User name: dhhs\firstname.mi.lastname
 - ii. Password: Same as state login password
 - b. Instructions to set up are found at <http://intranet/outlook/documents/access-with-iphone.pdf>
7. If necessary, remotely check your voicemail messages periodically throughout the day.
8. Complete all regular assignments as usual, unless otherwise directed by your supervisor.
9. Notify your supervisor of any technical or work process issues.
10. If you need to return to the office for any reason, you must not be under any kind of quarantine, not had any potential exposure, and must not be experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19. You are required to contact your supervisor before coming into the office. Supervisors will follow current Department of Administrative Services "Protocols on Returning to Work if Sick or Exposed to the COVID-10 Virus", before permitting return to the office. Current DHHS Human Resource and Department of Administrative Services policies apply.
11. You must continue to report the following to your supervisor, in accordance with current DHHS Human Resource and Department of Administrative Services policies.
 - a. Travel plans
 - b. Potential exposure
12. You may be required to report to the office and serve as a "skeleton crew" member upon the direction of your supervisor.

6093 TIPS FOR TELEWORKING

As many staff try to get comfortable with working from home, there are several things to help keep your work-life balance in check and maintain healthy and efficient teleworking habits.

- **Have the right technology in place.** The proper equipment and technological setup are the first step to effectively teleworking. Make sure you have access to a private Wi-Fi connection and that the applications you need to complete your tasks are accessible outside of the office.
- **Set up a separate office area.** It can be tempting to work from your bed or couch while you are at home. However, bringing work materials into your bedroom or comfort spaces can interfere with your ability to relax later. Designate an area, outside of your bedroom, that is solely for work. Find a space that remains yours. Try to avoid having to set up your office every day. It is also important to ensure "at home noises" (television, family members) are not distracting or heard by customers during phone calls. Confidentiality laws and policy still apply.

	ITEM 609	PAGE 3
BUREAU OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES	SUBJECT BCSS GUIDE TO TELEWORKING DURING COVID-19	DATE 04-2020 PR 20-07

- **Create a soothing environment.** Once you have designated a special work area, make it your own. Teleworking during this time can be stressful, so keep your stress level under control by incorporating items that make you feel calm. Try setting up your desk in front of a window or lighting candles you enjoy.
- **Set limits.** It is important to work as hard remotely as you would in the office, but don't let work bleed into your personal time, or vice versa. Track your hours to keep yourself accountable and aware of how much time you are working each day.
- **Take regular breaks.** Be sure to work breaks into your schedule. It is easy to stay sedentary when you are teleworking but taking a break and moving around will help you stay healthy. Get up and walk around every hour to encourage healthy blood flow or take your conference calls standing up.
- **Set a schedule.** It is important to maintain a level of structure when teleworking. Set a regular schedule, such as the one you use in the office. This will help keep you on track with your regular tasks and stay focused. Avoid working odd hours as best as you can.
- **Manage expectations.** Not everything can be accomplished through teleworking. Discuss with your manager what tasks are expected and be honest about what you can reasonably complete during this time.
- **Stay connected.** Stay connected with supervisors and coworkers to ensure that everyone is on the same page. Use online tools like email and Zoom to regularly touch base on assignments.
- **Eat healthy snacks.** Prepare healthy snacks of fruits and vegetables to help boost your energy throughout the day. This will keep you focused on the day's tasks and prevent you from feeling sluggish and tired.
- **Get the right instruction.** The following will help with your IT-related needs:
 - [Working Remotely – DoIT Information](#) 
 - [Helpful Hints for Working Remotely](#) 
 - [Working Remotely – Quick Tips](#) 
 - [Telework Toolkit](#) 

6094 TECHNICAL SUPPORT PLAN

The Child Support Information Systems (CSIS) Unit released a technical support plan, sent specifically to Supervisors to assist staff with telework equipment set up.

	ITEM 609	PAGE 4
BUREAU OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES	SUBJECT BCSS GUIDE TO TELEWORKING DURING COVID-19	DATE 04-2020 PR 20-07

*At this time while staff are trying to get their laptops set up, please gather the issues from your staff and send in a ticket through FootPrints to **NECSES Help Desk** for triage of the issues and to determine what can be fixed from NECSES Help Desk or if DOIT needs to get involved.*

Please tell your staff to NOT send individual tickets to NECSES Help Desk for their laptop issues. They should go to you with their issue(s), and a ticket should be created for all of the staff in your office. Any tickets that come from individual staff will be directed back to their Supervisor.

The plan is in place until all staff are effectively set up and fully functioning with telework equipment issued to them.

6095 NOTICE REGARDING IN-PERSON APPOINTMENTS

On March 17, 2020, the following message was posted to the BCSS website, front page, with a similar message subsequently added to the BCSS e-ChildSupport customer portal. This message may be included with customer correspondence regarding canceling in-person appointments when staff are not able to reach those customers by phone.

While the risk for widespread community transmission of COVID-19 in New Hampshire remains low, the priority of the Department of Health and Human Services is to ensure the health and safety of all those we serve. In an effort to slow the spread of illness, beginning Wednesday, March 18, 2020 until further notice, the Bureau of Family Assistance, the Bureau of Child Support Services, and the Bureau of Employment Supports will be conducting all appointments by phone only. If you have an appointment with us for any reason, including paternity testing, or have an upcoming child support-related court hearing, and you have not heard from us, please contact us as soon as possible in one of the following ways:

- *at your District Office, or*
- *e-ChildSupport Portal at <https://e-childsupport.dhhs.nh.gov/customer/>, or*
- *at our Central Information Unit by phone 603-271-4427, or*
- *through webmail at <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcsc/contact.htm> .*

6096 SCRIPTS FOR CUSTOMER CORRESPONDENCE

Staff may include the following customer scripts with paper correspondence and electronically through the e-ChildSupport customer portal email, as applicable. Reminder: staff are prohibited from using their work e-mail to correspond with customers.

General Message (this can be added broadly)

In response to COVID-19, we are continuously developing new ways of doing business. In order to continue the important work of the child support program, several staff are now teleworking. We appreciate your patience while we continue moving your case forward.

I just lost my job. Can I get my support order modified?

If you don't already have a case with us, we can certainly send an application to you for this service. If you have case with us, we will send necessary forms to you to complete to start that process. We appreciate your patience while we work through moving your case forward.

	ITEM 609	PAGE 5
BUREAU OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES	SUBJECT BCSS GUIDE TO TELEWORKING DURING COVID-19	DATE 04-2020 PR 20-07

I need help establishing a support order. What do I need to do?

We can certainly send an application for services to you. Please remember that because of COVID-19 we are doing our best to address the work of the child support program as our staff begin teleworking. We appreciate your patience while we continue moving your case forward.

What can you do to enforce my support order?

We know child support is very important to you and your family, and we want to ensure our services continue, and that we can address your child support needs. We are continuously reviewing how we can best assist both parents as the circumstances for each person and in each community is rapidly changing. We will continue to review each case and each party’s current situation to determine how to best serve both parties.

*Generally, policy and law already require that a case have 60 days without payment before most enforcement actions can start. Based on case information the last payment received on your case was, **insert date here**. Please contact us again after **insert date here** if you have not received payment. In the meantime, we will notify your Child Support worker of your concern and ask him/her to assess your case.*

Please remember that because of COVID-19 we are doing our best to address the work of the child support program as we begin teleworking. We appreciate your patience while we continue moving your case forward.

Understanding that this is a time of concern for everyone, please remember to reach out to all resources even if you have not been eligible in the past. Under the current circumstances, some of the eligibility criteria may be different. Here are some places you may wish to contact:

- 1) www.NHEasy.nh.gov
- 2) Bureau of Family Assistance, Customer Services Center, 1-844-275-3447 dial 2 to speak with a representative
- 3) www.NHES.nh.gov
- 4) www.211nh.org or www.211.org
- 5) Your local town/city welfare department

Will my IRS “stimulus” payment be taken by Child Support?

NOTE: A script is in development regarding this issue and will be provided soon.