



TELEWORKING ON SHORT NOTICE

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS,
MANAGERS & WORKERS

APRIL 2020



INTRODUCTION

While teleworking had been one of the fastest growing modes of commuting before the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) many organizations found themselves unprepared to support work from home options for employees. As state and local governments rolled out “stay at home” or “shelter in place” advisories, many organizations had to rapidly assess internal capacity for long-term telework implementation with only a few days’ notice. The Association for Commuter Transportation’s (ACT) Telework Council worked quickly to develop a webinar to provide key recommendations for organizations to put in place quick-response telework programs along with tips to support their employees who were not accustomed to teleworking.

While remote work options were growing in popularity before the outbreak of COVID-19, only 7% of employers in the United States offered the option of telework to most or all workers, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Hopefully this experience can help organizations start to put in place permanent telework policies that offer employees flexibility and convenience, while preparing organizations for future emergency situations.

ACT extends a special thanks to Allie Velleca, AECOM; Joseph Kang, Arlington County; Robin Mack, Mack Global LLC for leading our webinar and providing this important information, in addition to Elham Shirazi, E-Planning and Chair of the Telework Council.

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www.actweb.org

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TIPS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

1 Technology - Organizations should leverage the tools at hand for an easy transition. Allie Velleca, TDM Program Manager at AECOM and Vice Chair of the ACT Telework Council shared her experience, where AECOM's transition was easier because all employees work off laptops. Utilizing collaborative tools like Microsoft Teams or Slack that foster employee interaction will also heighten communication and provide a location for shared resources.

2 Policies - Even if telework is not a "business-as-usual" tactic, establishing clear telework policies is essential for all organizations to ensure organizational resiliency and preparedness moving forward. Telework policies should provide clarity for both employees and management to ensure success. Policies should make it clear which employees are eligible, expectations for communications and accountability, along with access and security expectations.

3 Eligibility - Assessing and reassessing the eligibility of workers will increase and organization's preparedness for emergency work from home scenarios. Joseph Kang, Enterprise Change Manager at Arlington County, shared how the county's recent efforts to identify eligible work from home employees prepared them for large-scale remote work. This includes being flexible with what responsibilities workers can perform at home. Regularly reassessing the eligibility of a position could reveal that with only a few modifications a position may become eligible.

4 Troubleshoot - Identify problematic areas that can cripple work productivity in a telework environment and assemble a team to assist with resolution. Establishing guidelines for a troubleshooting process should be a main focus when developing telework policies for an organization.



TIPS FOR MANAGERS

Robin Mack, CEO of Mack Global LLC and Secretary of ACT's Telework Council knows that managing remote workers can be an overwhelming experience which requires a certain level of trust and communication.

Most importantly, managers should focus on results, whether their employee is delivering quality results in a timely manner. To do this, managers should establish clear expectations and encourage team collaboration.

"Treat it as a professor giving an assignment to a student and all of the requirements are outlined including a due date. The professor doesn't come back and ask where the student was or who they were with, none of that really matters except the output, whether the work was done in a timely and quality manner, following the outlined requirements."

- Robin Mack, Mack Global LLC

TIPS FOR WORKERS

1

Communication – Combat feelings of isolation by leveraging communication tools to connect with your manager and teammates. Use existing technologies to chat, email, and video conference often. Text messages and video chat can be just as helpful in staying connected.

2

Schedules – Establishing a consistent routine is key, employees should aim to maintain regular work periods. Write down your daily tasks and prioritize them based on deadlines. Share progress updates internally to increase productivity and complete work on time.

3

Stay Active – When you travel to an office every day, you are likely walking from the train station or walking to lunch. Be sure to incorporate a home workout, yoga practice or walk around the block into your day.

4

Change Your Environment – A change of environment within your home workspace can keep you energized and productive throughout the day. Move to a different desk, light a candle, or play music you might hear in your company lobby or in the elevator.

5

Plan, But Be Flexible – If schools and businesses close and you are not alone in your house, plan to take shifts for childcare and adjust your work schedule as needed. Setting clear expectations for work and home will be important. Additionally, not all your teammates may be able to work remotely. Be prepared to jump in and complete tasks and provide input on projects you might not normally work on.

