

Everything You Wanted to Know about Telework in DLA

The following questions and answers are intended to clarify details of the DLA Telework Program. They are not intended as a replacement or substitute for law, regulation, policy, or negotiated agreement.

DLA Telework Resources

Are there written policies that govern telework in DLA? Where can I find them?

Yes. Written policies are detailed in DLA Instruction (DLAI) 7212, DLA Telework Program, located by link from <https://eworkplace.dla.mil/sites/prg/pages/oneBook.aspx#> (CAC access only). The instruction provides telework guidance for all DLA civilian employees (including non-appropriated fund employees) and active duty military service members. Some bargaining unit agreements, including the DLA-AFGE Council 169 Master Labor Agreement, have telework provisions. Except where mandated by law, should these questions and answers differ from provisions in a negotiated agreement, the agreement takes precedence for bargaining unit employees.

Are there additional resources available?

Yes. DLA Human Resources maintains a telework webpage that includes links to policy, guidelines, newsletters, and other useful information. Stay up-to-date by visiting the site regularly at <http://www.hr.dla.mil/resources/employment/current/telework.asp>. The Department of Defense maintains a webpage for DOD-wide policy and resources are at http://www.cpms.osd.mil/telework/telework_index.aspx. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) serves all Federal agencies with a comprehensive collection of resources including training, legislation, and frequently asked questions at www.telework.gov.

Is there someone I can speak with in person?

The best starting point is your supervisor. The next stop might be your Activity Telework Coordinator (TWC). DLA manages the Telework Program through a network of TWCs located throughout the Agency. The TWCs are our “frontline” at the activity level. They collaborate with DLA Human Resources, provide local advice and expertise, and maintain documents and data files. A link to the list of activity coordinators is on the DLA Telework webpage above.

General Information

What is Telework?

DLA defines telework as a work arrangement where an employee or military service member performs assigned official duties and other authorized activities during any part of regular, paid hours at an approved alternative worksite on a regular and recurring or a situational basis.

Why is there so much emphasis on telework?

Weather emergencies, natural disasters, pandemic threats, terrorist activities, traffic congestion, and environmental concerns all contribute to a growing, high level focus on telework. First and foremost, telework is about mission. Our customers continue to expect effective mission support even in the face of unanticipated events at one of our worksites. Our ability to sustain supply chain operations hinges on a workforce that is efficient, agile, and responsive despite unexpected events. Telework helps to ensure mission continuity by enabling employees to continue working despite unexpected disruptions.

What does it mean when we say that telework is “voluntary”?

For most of us, telework is voluntary in that employees are able to decide whether they are interested in participating in the program. If so, and if telework is feasible (position and employee are eligible, mission coverage is not impacted, etc.), then management and the employee document the schedule, expectations, any special requirements, and other parameters in writing.

When is telework participation NOT voluntary?

Some employees occupy positions with duties that are considered mission-critical during an emergency or unusual situation. Others work in facilities that must be vacated during a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) event. These employees may be required to participate in telework. When that is the case, the obligation and duties should be clearly documented as part of the telework agreement package.

Where should I telework? Is it always from home?

Telework can be performed in your home, at a telework center, or at any other location that is approved. Most DLA teleworkers work from their homes. Your telework location is specified in your telework agreement package. The most important factors are that the location provides an environment that is conducive to productive work and meets safety and security criteria.

Who will cover my desk and workload while I'm teleworking?

You will. Telework should be as seamless as possible for your supervisor, co-workers, and customers. Teleworkers are not “out of office” or “away.” They are simply performing their duties at an alternative location.

Can I expect to be treated fairly?

The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 states that teleworking and non-teleworking employees are to be considered and treated equitably. The Act specifically calls for equity in areas of managerial discretion including work requirements, performance appraisals, training, rewarding, and job changes (reassignment, promotion, reduction in grade, retention, and removal). This means, for example, performance expectations for employees who telework are to be the same as performance expectations for onsite employees.

Can my activity or office supplement the DLA policy or add its own local rules and interpretations?

DLAI 7212 states that it may not be supplemented by additional policy; however, executives in each activity have some latitude in determining how to best utilize telework within the

organization. This limited flexibility is granted because activities have different missions, staffing levels, and customer needs. Guidance provided by activities does not replace, augment, or overshadow agency policy or an applicable collective bargaining agreement

Can telework be used as an accommodation for a disability?

Employees requesting telework as a reasonable accommodation due to disabilities are covered both by the procedures in the Telework Program (DLAI 7212) and by *Procedures for Requesting Reasonable Accommodation for Individuals with Disabilities* at www.dla.mil/dlaps/dlai/doprroidproc.htm. When a telework request is based on reasonable accommodation for a disability, employees and management should consult their servicing Disability Program Coordinator for guidance (see www.dla.mil/do/pwd_coordinators.asp).

Is teleworking a substitute for child or elder care?

No. Telework may not be used as a substitute for dependent care when the care activities disrupt a teleworker's focus. A teenaged child or elderly relative might be at home with you, for example, as long as they are independently pursuing their own activities. You cannot be actively involved in caregiving while you telework.

Am I eligible for a transit subsidy if I am a teleworker?

Yes, however your transit subsidy must be adjusted to subtract telework days from your regular work schedule each month.

Am I covered if I am injured while teleworking?

Generally speaking, you are covered by the Federal Employment Compensation Act (FECA) if injured or if you suffer a work-related illness while conducting official business at the telework location. This is one of the reasons for identifying a single area within your home as your approved worksite. As soon as you leave that area or stop performing activities directly related to your regular duties, you may not be covered.

Eligibility and Readiness

How does management determine who is eligible to telework?

Eligibility is a two-step process: position eligibility and employee eligibility. The following questions clarify these steps.

What is position eligibility?

Organization leaders determine whether a position is appropriate for telework. Some jobs, for example, require the direct handling of secure or classified materials on a daily basis. Others may require an employee's physical presence for onsite activities or face-to-face contacts. For example, the positions of firefighters, sales clerks, and heavy equipment operators are unlikely to be eligible for telework.

What is employee eligibility?

Each employee's individual eligibility is determined based on multiple factors. Even though a position may be eligible for telework, an employee who occupies the position may not be. A

contracting position, for example, may be eligible; however, employees who handle contracts with classified information might be ineligible due to the nature of their assigned workloads. Mission requirements and staffing levels may be considered in order to maintain workload balance, employee engagement, office coverage, and the like. Performance, conduct, and training needs are also taken into consideration.

Are other factors involved in determining whether an employee may telework?

Yes, there are many considerations and questions that must be answered. Is the work sufficiently portable so that it can be done offsite? Can any special facilities or equipment be provided at the telework location? Is the employee thoroughly familiar with the organization, fully competent to perform assigned processes and workload, and ready to participate seamlessly in ongoing communication with supervisors, co-workers, and customers? Is on-the-job training needed or in progress? Does the employee train or mentor others? Is the employee well organized and able to work independently with minimal supervision? Can the employee provide a proper work environment that is safe, free from distractions, and conducive to productive work? Are sufficient means of communication possible, including computer connectivity, telephone, or other access needed to accomplish work assignments? DLAI 7212 has more information about eligibility and factors that may preclude or limit telework.

Are some employees banned from teleworking?

Yes. The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 specifies that employees are not eligible to telework under any circumstances if they have been officially disciplined for 1) being absent without permission for more than 5 days in any calendar year, or 2) accessing pornography on a government computer or while performing official duties. Other policies or agreements may further restrict telework eligibility.

Can new employees, interns, and others in developmental positions telework?

Based on the factors listed in DLAI 7212 and the questions above, supervisors and managers determine when an individual employee is ready to telework. An employee who is new to the government, for example, will probably take longer to be ready than someone who was promoted to a new job internally. Corporate Interns do not normally telework during their first year and, at some activities, for the duration of their developmental programs. DLAI 7212 provides minimum waiting periods; however, these timeframes are truly minimums. No one can predict readiness in advance. It must be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Can military personnel telework?

Military personnel may telework at the discretion of the activity's Approving Official.

Are supervisors eligible to telework?

Yes, supervisors may telework. The same eligibility and readiness requirements mentioned above apply to supervisors. The bottom line, as always, is impact on mission and the business needs of the organization.

Can part-time and temporary employees telework?

DLA policy does not prevent these employees from teleworking; however, care must be taken to ensure all other eligibility and mission requirements are being met.

Some of my job duties are eligible for telework, but some are ineligible. Can I telework?

Each position and individual must be evaluated separately to determine whether telework is appropriate. If an employee's duties can be grouped successfully, then telework might be possible. Let's say, for example, that Tony works on both classified and unclassified information. If the supervisor and Tony both agree that the assignments can be grouped so that a full day each week can be dedicated to unclassified work, then telework is possible for one day per week. Here's a second example: Morgan is a full-time receptionist. In between customer visits, Morgan inputs orders into a database. Although the input duties are portable, the reception duties are not. Because the input is on a "time available" basis, it can not be grouped separately from the primary customer contact duties. Morgan is probably not able to telework.

Telework Arrangement Process

Who is responsible for managing telework arrangements in my organization?

DLA has designated leaders in each activity as Approving Officials to manage telework in their respective organizations. For DLA Headquarters, Approving Officials are the Executive Board members, usually the Director of a J code or Staff Office. For DLA Primary Level Field Activities (PLFA), Approving Officials are the Deputy Commanders.

Who can approve my telework request?

Approving Officials may further delegate *approval* authority in writing as they deem appropriate. In some DLA organizations, for example, first line supervisors have the authority to sign and approve telework arrangements for their employees. Other Approving Officials have retained the authority without further delegation. Still others have chosen to differentiate depending on the nature of the request so that certain arrangements are approved at a higher level than others.

Who can deny my telework request?

Authority to *disapprove* a telework arrangement may not be delegated below the Approving Official, which means that only an Executive Board member (the Director or Deputy Director in your activity) can deny a request.

What are acceptable reasons for denying a request to telework?

Management can deny a request to telework based on mission requirements or the needs of the employee and/or workgroup. For example, an employee may require more than normal supervision (based on being new to the organization, trainee status, conduct, performance, etc.), the position may not be eligible, the employee's specific workload may be limiting, or the workgroup may not be staffed adequately to provide needed face-to-face office coverage. The denial should be made in writing, include an explanation of the mission and/or individual reasons, and be provided in a timely manner.

Why are there so many forms? In my previous Defense activity, we only had one.

It is true that most DOD Agencies now use a single form. In DLA, we use a set of four legacy forms that, when packaged together, fulfill the legal and regulatory requirements.

DLA Forms Required in a Complete Telework Agreement Package

DLA Forms (in order of use)	Purposes/Requirements fulfilled
DLA Form 1864 - Telework Request and Approval Form	Initiates the application process. Documents duties to be performed and expected results; includes any requirements that are unique to the employee or position (obligations during emergencies or communication requirements, for example); proposes an alternative worksite and schedule.
DLA Form 1867 - Self-Certification Home Safety Checklist	Documents the safety and appropriateness of the proposed alternative worksite.
DLA Form 1866 - Supervisor - Employee Checklist	Verifies that all required steps are complete; documents DLA owned equipment issued; confirms that required security, safety, and technology discussions have occurred; confirms that performance expectations are understood; confirms that supervisor and employee have completed mandatory training.
DLA Form 1865 - Telework Agreement	Finalizes arrangements described in DLA Form 1864 and the checklists by using generic procedural and compliance language. Page 3 is completed when ending the telework arrangement.

When in this process can I begin to telework?

By law, a telework agreement outlining the terms and conditions of the telework arrangement must be signed before telework may begin. In DLA, this means that required training and all four forms must be complete.

I don't telework often – only during emergencies or when I have a special project. Do I need to complete the agreement process?

Yes. The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 requires that all teleworkers must have agreements in place prior to beginning.

Is telework training really mandatory for both the employee and the supervisor?

Yes. The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 is very clear about training as a requirement. Telework agreements may not be signed unless both the employee and immediate supervisor have completed the required training.

Can the training be waived?

No. The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 also restricts waivers. They may only be granted by the “head of the executive agency” (for DLA, the Secretary of Defense). Employees and supervisors should plan to take the required training.

Where is the required training located?

Current information on telework regulations, policy, and training is located on the DLA Human Resources telework page at <http://www.hr.dla.mil/resources/employment/current/telework.asp>.

What period of time does a telework arrangement last?

Arrangements for regular and recurring telework are normally in one year increments. An arrangement might be shorter or longer (but no longer than a maximum of two years) if that makes sense to both supervisor and employee. Situational or medical telework arrangements, on the other hand, may be for a single project or recovery event.

When do I have to replace or revalidate my telework agreement package?

Because a telework arrangement defines so many work factors and is an agreement between a supervisor and an employee, it must be replaced or reaffirmed when a change occurs. For example, a new agreement package (or signed revalidation of an existing package) is appropriate with:

- A permanent change in type of telework (e.g., from situational to regular and recurring),
- A move to a different alternative worksite,
- Assignment to a position with different duties and expectations, or
- A change in mission-critical assignments or other work requirements (for example, during emergency situations).

I have a new supervisor. Do I need a new agreement package?

Not necessarily. You and your new supervisor should discuss the contents of your telework arrangement to make sure they are current, clearly understood, and mutually acceptable. Pen and ink changes can be made, if necessary.

Work Schedules in Telework Arrangements

What standard telework schedules does DLA offer?

DLA offers two overarching types of telework arrangements:

- Regular and Recurring Telework. An employee is scheduled to work at an approved alternative worksite in a regular and recurring pattern.
- Situational Telework (sometimes referred to as periodic, ad hoc, or intermittent telework). An employee's telework is unscheduled, project-oriented, or irregular in nature. Examples include telework to:
 - Continue operations when the traditional worksite is closed to the public, access is limited, or commuting is dangerous.
 - Practice telework to ensure readiness for continuing operations in the event of a crisis or national emergency.
 - Perform short-term projects or assignments that require concentration and uninterrupted blocks of time for successful completion.
 - Allow work by an employee who is temporarily unable to physically report to the traditional office (e.g., when recovering from illness or injury).
 - Complete web-based or other distance learning.

Do I have to choose just one or can I do both?

If you are approved to telework on a regular and recurring basis, you are also permitted to use situational telework as needed with your supervisor's permission. However, if you are approved for situational telework, a new telework arrangement is required to "upgrade" to regular and recurring.

Why isn't medical telework included above?

Medical telework may be either regular and recurring or situational in nature. It is approved for an employee who is temporarily unable to physically report to the traditional office. As a general rule, it is used for short-term situations like recovery from surgery or a broken bone. Longer term medical needs are processed using *Procedures for Requesting Reasonable Accommodation for Individuals with Disabilities* at www.dla.mil/dlaps/dlai/doprraidproc.htm. Because long term situations may be permanent or near-permanent, this process results in either a regular and recurring or a situational telework designation.

Can I set my own schedule while teleworking to maximize work/life balance?

While teleworking you must work in a regularly scheduled pattern based on your organization's work hour requirements and flexibilities, just as you do at your normal duty station. Completely unstructured arrangements, where employees simply work at will, are not authorized in DLA.

How often can I telework?

DLA policy allows telework to be granted from 1 to 5 days per week. Management evaluates telework requests on a case-by-case basis and considers mission needs in deciding on the appropriate frequency.

Can I telework full time?

Telework involves working from an alternative worksite. If you work at another location full time, it is not telework but a change in your official worksite. Although DLA policy allows employees to telework from 1 to 5 days per week, stipulations in law require regularly scheduled time at the official worksite. According to 5 CFR 531.605, teleworkers must be "scheduled to work at least twice each biweekly pay period on a regular and recurring basis at the regular worksite for the employee's position of record." Exceptions are possible for temporary medical conditions, emergencies, and similar situations.

Do these "regularly scheduled" times at the official worksite need to be for full days?

Not necessarily. Your scheduled time onsite could be for a weekly staff meeting or other regularly scheduled event. There is no requirement to spend full workdays. Further information about splitting workdays is included later in this section.

Can my supervisor designate different telework schedules for different people in my office?

Yes. Your supervisor will consider telework requests on a case-by-case basis and may designate different schedules for different positions and individuals based on factors such as mission, organizational needs, and the individual employee's work habits.

What work schedule and “hours of duty” policies apply while I am teleworking?

Unless otherwise specified in the telework arrangement, existing DLA policies and bargaining unit agreements regarding hours of work apply to teleworkers. If an employee works on a flexible schedule while onsite, for example, that flexible schedule may be extended to telework days. This includes any guidance on core hours, start and stop times, breaks, etc.

Can I continue my AWS schedule if I telework?

Telework and Alternate Work Schedules (AWS) are not mutually exclusive, as they are very different arrangements. However, your supervisor must judge what is feasible for your workgroup in terms of team involvement and onsite coverage that is needed. Even if a regular telework schedule is not workable in combination with AWS, you may be able to telework on a situational basis.

May I use leave on telework days?

Yes, subject to the normal leave policies for your organization. With supervisory approval, you may use leave, compensatory time, or AWS/Credit Hours on any day of the week.

Can I be required to schedule medical and other appointments only on my telework days?

No. You are not expected to take leave only on your telework days. Sick or annual leave may occur on a telework or a non-telework day without impacting your normal telework schedule.

Can I earn and use credit hours while I telework?

Yes. Unless specified otherwise in your telework agreement, the same Hours of Duty policy and collective bargaining agreements apply while teleworking as when working onsite.

Am I eligible to work overtime or compensatory time while teleworking?

Yes, you may if you have received supervisory approval in advance. The same rules that apply onsite also apply when you telework.

Am I teleworking when I'm on Temporary Duty (TDY) travel?

No. Telework does not include any part of work done while on official travel. By definition, telework occurs at the approved alternative site identified in your telework arrangement. Whether work is done in an office or a hotel room, the TDY location is your official worksite during travel. You are authorized to work there, but it is not telework.

Am I allowed to telework prior to my departure on TDY or following my return?

Yes, with supervisory approval, you may be allowed to telework prior to your departure or following your return. Remember, however, that all telework must be performed at the approved alternative work site that is specified in your telework arrangement.

Can I work part of the day in the office and the rest of the day from my telework site?

Yes, splitting the day is allowed. On the downside, this defeats several of telework's primary purposes including reduced traffic congestion and commuting costs.

Can my supervisor require me to be in the office on specific days or at specific times (for example, for staff meetings each week)?

Yes. Your supervisor determines when telework is appropriate and may require you and/or your co-workers to be onsite at a given time or day. There are a variety of reasons for this including meetings, training sessions, official presentations, or other mission requirements.

Can my supervisor cancel my telework day in advance so that I must report to the office instead?

Yes, supervisors have the authority to call an employee into the office or modify a telework arrangement at any time based on mission needs.

If my supervisor calls me while I'm teleworking and tells me to report to the office immediately, do I have to go?

Yes, supervisors have the authority to recall an employee from a telework location at any time.

Can my supervisor ask me to switch my telework days?

Yes, your supervisor may request that you switch telework days. Reasons for this might include staffing levels, required training, additional mission requirements, etc.

Can I ask to switch telework days?

You may occasionally switch a regular telework day if you and your supervisor agree to the change. A permanent or long term switch should be annotated as a schedule change in your telework agreement package. Some common reasons for a switch include:

- A short-term work assignment when a distraction-free location is preferred.
- A temporary situation that makes it challenging to report to the official duty site on a given day, i.e.; injury, car trouble, home maintenance, traffic, etc.
- Holidays or leave use interferes with an employee's recurring telework schedule.

Must I switch telework days on these occasions or can I add a situational telework day to my recurring schedule instead?

Supervisors and employees should work together to make this decision on a case-by-case basis. DLA policy allows regular and recurring teleworkers to switch or add situational days with supervisory approval.

Why might my supervisor deny a request to switch days?

Supervisors are expected to balance the needs of the work unit in making telework schedule decisions. Although flexibility is encouraged, the supervisor is in the best position to assess the impact on work flow, employee interaction and involvement, office coverage, and the like.

Can I change my regular and recurring telework schedule?

Yes, you can change if both you and your supervisor agree to the adjustments. For minor changes, adjustments may be annotated in your telework agreement package and initialed by both parties. Major revisions may require a new request package to be initiated.

What is the difference between a “minor change” and a new request?

Your supervisor manages the day-to-day administration of your productivity and telework arrangement. When you and your supervisor discuss and agree on a change (approved telework location, which days are scheduled, how many days are scheduled, expected results, etc.), those changes may simply be documented by pen and ink changes in your telework documents. A new request, on the other hand, implies a fresh start and is adjudicated based on the delegation policy of the Approving Official.

What if I decide that I do not want to continue teleworking?

A telework arrangement can be terminated at any time using page 3 of DLA Form 1865 - Telework Agreement. If you no longer wish to telework, notify your supervisor in writing. The details should be discussed and formally recorded in your telework package.

Can my supervisor suspend or end my participation in the telework program?

Yes, supervisors have the right to suspend or end participation at any time if it adversely affects mission accomplishment or individual contribution. Management may also end telework participation if an employee no longer meets the criteria to telework as a result of performance or conduct. Decisions to terminate telework arrangements should be discussed and documented on page 3 of the DLA Form 1865 – Telework Agreement along with appropriate rationale.

My supervisor canceled my telework. What recourse do I have?

Supervisors have the authority to approve, modify, and cancel telework arrangements. If an employee believes the action taken is not in accordance with established policies, he or she may pursue a complaint through either the administrative grievance process or the grievance procedure in the appropriate collective bargaining agreement.

Seamless Communication

Who is responsible for effective communication?

The Department of Defense website is a good source of telework information. On the information page for employees is an insightful rule of thumb: “Managers are responsible for the effective functioning of the workgroup. However, teleworkers are responsible for their availability and information sharing with the workgroup and for ensuring the success of the telework arrangement.” (Step 9, http://www.cpms.osd.mil/telework/telework_employees.aspx) The website goes on to advise that pre-arrangements be made for unusual circumstances requiring backup, onsite assistance, and customer coordination.

Will teleworking cause extra work for my supervisor or co-workers who remain onsite?

Telework should never unduly burden those who remain onsite. Co-workers should not be expected to “cover” for an employee who is teleworking. Well planned and executed, telework should be nearly transparent to customers and co-workers. If it is not, negative attitudes may result. A sound communication strategy that is put into action by both supervisors and employees is essential to maintaining internal and customer relationships.

How can our team relationships be maintained with so many employees teleworking?

Maintaining employee engagement and effective team dynamics in a telework setting can be challenging for both supervisors and employees. In many workplaces, interaction between teammates is the mechanism for coaching, informal mentoring, sharing new ideas, learning or refining processes, discovering misunderstandings, and building effective working relationships. For this reason, it is increasingly important to be intentional and make time for individual and team interactions.

Are there tools or techniques available to assist in staying connected?

Yes. Here are a few that may help:

- Make frequent use of available tools, including the telephone, Voice Over Internet (VOIP), and “real time” conversations using Office Communicator’s instant text, voice, or video messaging.
- Obtain a Meet-Me-Number (MMN teleconference line) and/or Defense Connect Online (DCO) “room” that is dedicated to your work unit. Encourage employees to use it for group discussions and ad hoc meetings.
- Maintain a record of meetings, discussions, and outcomes using a system of electronically filed meeting minutes/notes. The minutes and notes will be useful in refreshing memories, updating those who were absent, clarifying how and when decisions were reached, and tracking action items.
- Use a shared calendar to:
 - Record upcoming events such as retirements and workplace socials. Information formerly conveyed by public address or a poster on the bulletin board is no longer accessible by virtual workers.
 - Identify employees who are away from the office as a result of TDY, telework, training, extended leave, or regularly scheduled AWS. To the extent that it does not compromise privacy, it may be useful to include contact information so that co-workers can reach an employee directly during a telework day.
- Establish recurring face-to-face days or meetings when all employees are onsite. For example, to facilitate continued employee engagement, supervisors may arrange schedules so that no employee is teleworking on a given day each week.

Should I leave an “out of office” message on email and voicemail?

No. You are not “out of office” during telework; you are working from an alternative worksite. Regardless of whether you are working onsite or teleworking, the goal is to provide seamless customer support. To the degree possible, your customers should not be able to distinguish where you are working. For this reason, it is even more important for teleworkers to promptly respond to incoming telephone calls and voicemails, email, and any other communication with customers, supervisors, and co-workers.

Should I include my telework schedule in my email signature?

Generally, this is not recommended for two reasons. First, your customer’s perception of seamless support may be impacted by the knowledge that you are not right there at your desk in the office. Second, and possibly more important, posting your schedule creates potential operational security risks.

What if my organization doesn't have the technology needed for "seamless" communication?
Your supervisor and management team determine your activity's telecommunication needs and whether existing technology is sufficient to allow telework. Mission requirements and internal expectations vary, so it is best to discuss these concerns with your supervisor.

Performance Management

Is the performance of teleworkers managed differently than that of onsite staff?

Effective performance management is the same whether or not an employee teleworks. Performance is, after all, about doing the work not about where it is done. Performance measures and expectations do not change for teleworkers; however, the focus shifts from the individual's physical presence in the office to the value of the outcomes. Work products should be of the same quantity, quality, and timeliness – no matter where the work is performed.

That makes logical sense, but how does it work in practice?

Telework is, by nature, a program that requires self-management skills from both supervisors and employees. For some, it may require more attention to pre-planning in order to ensure accountability systems are in place and assignments are planned in advance. Successful telework relationships also require attention to effective communication. Clear performance expectations, interim checkpoints, and frequent feedback, while important in any work arrangement, are an absolute necessity in a teleworking environment. Needless to say, these same communication and organizational strategies are also impactful for the onsite workforce.

How does a supervisor know that employees are really working when they are out of sight?

Based on results. Effective performance management is the same whether or not an employee teleworks. Managers should measure employee performance by results, not physical presence. However, telework may require some changes in communication techniques, and managers may need to be more mindful of the ways they assign and reward work to ensure they are equitable.

How should we set the "ground rules" for this new type of relationship?

The DLA process used to develop a telework agreement package provides a good template for the discussions that need to take place between supervisors and employees. These discussions are important to ensure that they understand each other's expectations around issues such as:

- How will assignments be made, clarifications sought, and expectations defined?
- What are the metrics and accountability measures that will be used?
- What milestones and/or updates will show that work is being accomplished as intended?
- Will there be any changes in the way work products are submitted?
- How will the teleworker maintain communication with supervisor, customers, and coworkers?
- How available will the teleworker be—is the telework intended to be seamless, so that phone, email, etc. are dealt with the same as in the office? Or is the employee teleworking to be away from such distractions to accomplish a specific project?

Can a supervisor monitor an employee's work?

As with onsite employees, supervisors are expected to monitor work quality, the reasonableness of work output for the time spent, and other measures of productivity. In the same vein, supervisors are also expected to be aware of and certify the correctness of time and attendance. In order to do these things with integrity, supervisors check in with their staffs, ask questions, look for progress, verify attendance, and so on. To do so for a teleworker who is not readily available at the worksite, this often involves more frequent email traffic, telephone calls, and messaging.

When I telework, can my supervisor require me to send an email when I start working, take lunch, and stop working?

A supervisor may require a teleworker to check-in with the same frequency that onsite employees are expected to check-in. For example, if you are expected to stick your head into the boss's office in the morning and say, "Hey, boss, I'm here," then a morning email is consistent and reasonable. Unless your telework arrangement requires otherwise, your telework obligations are the same as those when you are onsite.

Are there employees who just aren't well suited for telework?

Yes. Telework is not for everyone. The Department of Defense recommends that employees conduct an honest self-assessment by considering such factors as these:

- You have the ability to work independently, without close supervision.
- You are comfortable and able to use the technologies that will be needed to telework.
- You have good communication with supervisor, co-workers, and customers that will enable a relatively seamless transition from onsite to offsite.
- You have telework office space that meets safety requirements and is conducive to getting the work done.
- You can make arrangements for dependent care (i.e., childcare, eldercare, or care of any other dependent adults) so that they don't interfere with telework.
- You have ability to be flexible about the telework arrangement to respond to the needs of the supervisor, the workgroup, and the work.

The full assessment is Step 4 at http://www.cpms.osd.mil/telework/telework_employees.aspx.

Weather and Unexpected Events

What should I do if there is an equipment failure or power outage while I'm teleworking?

If you are unable to work at the designated alternative site due to equipment failure, power outage, etc., you should contact your local technical support organization or service provider immediately to attempt to fix the problem. If the problem cannot be resolved within a *reasonable* period of time, contact your supervisor to determine next steps. These steps might include reporting to the official duty station for the remainder of the outage or taking appropriate leave. The period of time spent attempting to reestablish a connection (rebooting the computer, power cycling internet modem, working with tech support, etc.) and the time needed to drive to your official duty station may be credited as regular duty hours.

Can I telework during inclement weather or a similar emergency that limits access?

In the event of an emergency that limits access to your normal duty station, unscheduled telework may be authorized depending on the circumstances. If unscheduled telework is allowed, you may telework whether or not you were regularly scheduled to do so if you are telework ready, meaning that you: 1) have a current, approved telework arrangement, and 2) have both the equipment and sufficient work available to perform productive work.

How do I find out about the circumstances that allow unscheduled telework?

DLA Human Resources has published procedures that detail the implications for a variety of Operating Status Announcements (base closure, late arrival, and early departure situations). For more information, visit “DLA Guidance on Dismissal and Closure Procedures” at <https://eworkplace.dla.mil/SITES/ORG3/J1/Pages/default.aspx>. The procedure has its own set of frequently asked questions to help in interpreting the guidance.

Besides unscheduled telework as mentioned above, are there other circumstances that would be of particular interest to teleworkers?

Yes. Although teleworker guidelines are outlined for every status announcement in the dismissal and closure procedures, “Closed to the Public” includes a provision that may be new to some. Employees who are scheduled to telework, whether regular and recurring or situational, are expected to do so when their facility is Closed to the Public.

Why are teleworkers expected to work if the facility is closed?

The reason is that employees who were already planning to telework from home are *able* to attend work as scheduled, so the closure does not impact the planned workday. Telework is one of our agency’s primary tools for providing customer support during emergency or inclement weather situations. It is an integral part of the DLA COOP plan and, as such, is intended to prepare us for this type of situation.

What if I telework somewhere other than at home and my telework location is also closed or inaccessible?

If your telework site is also closed because of the same emergency, then you are excused just like those who are not able to reach their normal worksites.

What if my children are also home because their school is closed?

This or any other personal circumstance that prohibits telework should be discussed with your supervisor to determine the appropriate course of action.

Am I required to telework if I’m telework ready (I have my laptop and sufficient work with me at home), the installation is closed, but I am not scheduled for telework that day?

No, if the base is closed due to inclement weather or an emergency and you are normally scheduled to work onsite that day, you have the same status as everyone else who was expected to report to your worksite. You are not required to telework. You may, however, choose to do so in support of your customers.

What should I do in advance of inclement weather or other emergency in order to be prepared for unscheduled telework?

Ask your supervisor to outline your office procedures for weather related closures and dismissals. Are you, for example, required to notify your supervisor if you plan to take unscheduled leave or unscheduled telework?

Timekeeping

Why is it important to code telework correctly in EAGLE?

Like all Federal agencies, DLA is required by law to keep accurate records of telework usage. To do so, we depend on employees, supervisors, and timekeepers to properly document all telework hours worked in time and attendance systems (e.g., Employee Activity Guide for Labor Entry (EAGLE)).

What are the codes and definitions for reporting telework in EAGLE?

Use the following codes to record telework in EAGLE:

- TW – Telework, regular and recurring – Telework based on your approved schedule.
- TS – Telework, situational – Telework on an occasional or irregular basis. Or, any telework that is not part of your recurring schedule. Or, any overtime, credit, or compensatory time that is not part of a recurring schedule. Or, unscheduled telework.
- TM – Telework, medical* – Telework for short-term medical reasons for an employee who is temporarily unable to physically report to the traditional office.

* Note: Long term situations that appear to be *permanent or near-permanent* and have been adjudicated under Reasonable Accommodation procedures are coded as either regular and recurring (TW) or situational (TS) telework.

I have a regular and recurring schedule but sometimes vary from it or add a situational day. How should I code it?

Telework that is based on your regular and recurring schedule (including swaps) is coded as TW. Any situational variations or additions are coded as TS.

I sometimes earn overtime, comp time, or credit hours while teleworking. How do I code it?

Telework that is based on your regular and recurring schedule (including swaps) is coded as TW. If overtime, comp, or credit are part of your recurring schedule, it is also coded as TW. Any other hours worked are situational and coded as TS.

Does time spent traveling to my worksite count as work hours?

In some circumstances, it may. See the scenarios below for examples.

- If a teleworker is directed to travel to the official duty station during his or her regularly scheduled basic tour of duty – for instance, for an unplanned meeting or an emergency at the duty station – the teleworker's travel hours are credited as hours of work.
- If a teleworker is unable to work at the designated alternative site due to equipment failure, power outage, etc., he or she must contact the supervisor who, based on the situation, determines the appropriate duty/ leave status and whether the employee

should report to the official duty station. If directed to report, travel to the duty station based on this scenario is credited as hours of work.

- If a teleworker is notified *in advance* that his or her presence is needed at the office, then telework is effectively cancelled for the day (and/or swapped for another day) and travel is treated as a normal commute.
- If a teleworker is scheduled to split or voluntarily splits his/her work hours for the day between home office and workplace (without being unexpectedly directed to report), travel is treated as a normal commute.
- If the teleworker is directed to travel to the office before or after his or her regularly scheduled basic tour of duty thereby creating an overtime situation, the travel may be credited and the employee may be entitled to at least two hours of overtime pay under the "call back" rules. (See [5 CFR 550.112\(h\) and 551.401\(e\)](#).)
- Other circumstances that bring an employee to the official duty station may arise. For instance, if an important document is left behind and must be retrieved in order for work to proceed, a teleworker must receive approval from his or her supervisor to interrupt work for travel to the main office. If the trip is approved and occurs during the teleworker's regularly scheduled basic tour of duty, the employee's travel time is considered hours of work. For this reason, supervisors must evaluate whether such a trip is necessary before granting approval. The supervisor may, for example, require the employee to work at the main office for the remainder of the workday in order to maximize actual work hours (vs. paying salary for a 2-way commute).

Additional Training

Where can I learn more about teleworking on a virtual team?

Online training is available via the DLA LMS. There is no cost for using the SkillSoft courses, including these telework-related titles:

- 4-part series with 2 simulations:
 - Part 1 - *Launching Successful Virtual and On-site Teams* (LDR-TEAM01A01)
 - Part 2 - *Leading High-performance On-site Teams* (LDR-TEAM01A02)
 - Simulation for Parts 1 & 2 - *Creating Virtual and High-performance Teams Simulation* (LDR-TEAM001A)
 - Part 3 - *Leading High-performance Virtual Teams* (LDR-TEAM01A03)
 - Part 4 - *Facilitating Virtual and On-site Teams* (LDR-TEAM01A04)
 - Simulation for Parts 3 & 4 - *Leading High-performance Virtual Teams Simulation* (LDR-TEAM001B)
- *Telecommuting Basics: Maximizing Productivity as a Remote Employee* (GEN-PD08A01)
- *Telecommuting Basics: Communication Strategies for the Remote Employee* (GEN-PD08A02)
- *Assessing Performance Continuously* (LDR-MGMT11A01)

Where can I find additional reading on working in a virtual environment?

Hundreds of books related to telework are also available in the DLA LMS via *Books 24x7*.

Detailed access instructions are located at <http://www.hr.dla.mil/dtc/skillsoft.asp>. In a nutshell,

LMS users can quickly find books by choosing “Advanced Catalog Search” from the catalog menu, then searching on “Skillsoft Books” as the title. When Skillsoft Books appears on the results screen, click “Go to Content” under the Action column and follow the prompts. The *Books 24x7* page includes a search box near the top. To find items related to telework, try searching on one of the following: virtual teams, virtual team leadership, telework, or telecommuting.