Telecommuting Guidelines & Checklists

Colorado School of Mines' commitment to safely and effectively meet the public health challenge presented by COVID-19 extends to encouraging that employees can work from home or another remote location whenever necessary in the coming weeks. Teleworking arrangements are not new, but because they may be unfamiliar to employees and managers, this resource will help you and your team navigate potential teleworking scenarios. ***These arrangements must be approved by your Manager and may be modified at any time***.

This guidance is for Managers, employees and departments and is designed to help set up temporary remote work arrangements quickly and successfully.

1. **What is teleworking and how does it differ from other forms of remote work?**
Telework is a work arrangement in which some or all of the work is performed from home or another off-site location. In general, regular office hours are worked and deviations from that schedule require Manager approval.

2. **Which factors should departments/units consider when determining if telework is possible?**

   o Operational requirements

   o Security of work data

   o Technological capabilities and equipment necessary to perform job duties

   o Productivity

   o Accuracy of records reflecting time worked by non-exempt and classified employees, includes completing a weekly timecard.

3. **Which jobs are suited for teleworking?**
Teleworking is easiest to implement for jobs or tasks that require reading, writing, research, working with data and talking on the phone. In general, and at management's discretion, a job is suited to teleworking if the job or some components of it can be done off-site without disruption to the flow of work and communication.

   Managers permitting remote work by hourly employees (meaning non-exempt and eligible for overtime pay) that are paid monthly (and not required to submit a time sheet through Banner) MUST have the employee complete a time sheet. You may find a timesheet template [here](#) for your employees.

4. **What's most important to starting a productive teleworking arrangement?**
Clearly outlined and executed teleworking arrangements can prove beneficial to employees and managers alike. Managers should articulate clear procedures regarding check-in times and hours of availability. With proper planning, communications problems can be minimized.

5. **How does an employee access Mines' network and data from home?**
Please navigate to the [ITS Remote Work Web page](#) for support. For additional support and assistance, please contact the Mines Help Desk at x2345 or via Microsoft Teams Chat.

6. **Will hiring activities proceed as planned?**

While Colorado School of Mines has adopted new measures to deal with COVID-19, hiring may continue by utilizing remote technologies as much as possible. Campus visits and in-person interviews should be conducted remotely via video.

Before initiating a new offer to a candidate, consider whether there is sufficient work for them to perform remotely and ensure you will be in a position to effectively onboard, train, and manage them. If not, refrain from making an offer until the campus has resumed normal operations and a start date can be established. You may consult with a member of the Talent Acquisition Team to determine the best course of action for your particular situation.

If an offer has already been made and accepted, it may not be rescinded. Identify ways to onboard and train the employee through remote means. Consider having the new employee work through online trainings or participate in online professional development courses or readings. Include them in remote meetings when possible. If it is not feasible for the employee to work from home, then paid administrative leave will be granted.

If Mines moves into **mandatory** remote work and remote teaching, only employees performing critical services will be permitted and allowed to work on campus. Hiring may continue; however, new offers should <u>not</u> be made until the campus has resumed normal operations and a start date can be established. **Exceptions** include critical services positions where a plan exists to onboard, train, manage, and provide necessary resources for the new employee.

Lastly, in light of the situation, we should suspend volunteers until normal operations resume.

Manager checklist for supporting teleworking

Telework works best when employees and Managers communicate clearly about expectations. The following checklist will help you establish a foundation for effective teamwork, continued productivity, and service to the Mines community.

- **Review technology needs and resources.**
  Identify technology tools staff use in their daily work and determine whether the resources will be accessible when working from home. Maintain a list of all assets the employee has in their possession, including both physical hardware and software. Also, ensure employees know how to access the appropriate technical support should they need assistance.

  - o Confirm that employees know how to access their voicemail from home.

  - o Determine which platform(s) you will use to communicate as a team, clarify expectations for online availability and confirm everyone has access to the technology tool(s) and support resources. Mines employees have free access to Office 365 including Microsoft Teams (Instant Messaging capability), Basic Zoom meeting conference access, and your department may have additional tools or resources.

- **Review work schedules.**
  Be clear about your expectations with employees for maintaining their current work schedule or if you are open to flexible scheduling based on employee needs. Establish staggered on campus office/department coverage, if needed.

- **Draft a work plan.**
  Review the questions below with staff and work through answers together.

  o What routine responsibilities/tasks cannot be fulfilled while working remotely and how will it impact operations or other people? What are ways to reduce the impacts?

  o What routine responsibilities/tasks require regular communication and collaboration with others? Proactively contact each other to confirm how you will communicate while everyone is working remotely.

  o Oftentimes employees experience fewer interruptions while teleworking. Are there any special projects or tasks that you can advance while working remotely?

  o What events or meetings are scheduled during the time in which the telework arrangement is in place? Will they be postponed or canceled, or will they take place using technology? What follow-up needs to occur due to postponements or cancellations?

- **Make a communication and accountability plan.**
  Managers should tell employees how often they should send updates on work plan progress and what those updates should include. Managers should also communicate how quickly they expect the employee to respond while teleworking and the best ways for the employee to contact the Manager while working remotely. Current performance standards are expected to be maintained by employees.

  o Managers should obtain a personal contact/phone list for employees and share how you can be reached

  o If you normally make daily rounds to visit employees at their desks, you can give them a call during this period. Maintain team meetings and one-to-one check-ins, altering the schedule if needed to accommodate any alternative schedules that have been approved.

  o Conduct regular check-ins. Start each workday with a phone, video (zoom) or instant message chat. Your employees will be eager for connection and information during the disruption and the structure will help everyone create a positive routine. Every other day or weekly may be fine, so long as you are in contact frequently enough that your employees are in sync with you and/or with one another.

- **Be positive.**
  A positive attitude toward teleworking and a willingness to trust employees to telework effectively is key to making such arrangements successful and productive. Teleworking presents an opportunity for managers to become better Managers. Instead of focusing on how many hours your employees are working, re-emphasize a focus on measuring results and reaching objectives—regardless of work arrangement. The employee's completed work product is the indicator of success, rather than direct observation. By focusing on the

employee's work product, Managers will improve their organizational abilities and their own skill in managing by objectives.

- **Debrief after normal operations resume.**
Employees and Managers should review work plans when work returns to normal, assess progress on the employee's work plan and prioritize any unresolved or new work that resulted from temporary operational disruption.

Teleworking tips for employees

1. **How are employees reachable while teleworking?** Ensure your Manager(s) and team members have your direct personal contact information (cell phone, home phone, etc.)

2. **Define your workspace.**
Experienced teleworkers will tell you that it's often difficult to stay focused at home. We are creatures of habit and most of us are used to our normal home routines. Establishing a workspace, even if it is your kitchen table. You should remain capable of reporting to work if your presence is requested by your Manager.

3. **Master the basics.**

    o Know how to remote into the Mines network and other online tools you use regularly.

    o Use Zoom or another instant messaging client (Microsoft Teams) to stay connected to colleagues.

    o Plan for video calls/meetings by making sure you know how to turn on your computer's camera and microphone and being aware that your colleagues may be able to see the background behind you.

4. **Set daily goals, track them and share your progress.**
You may be surprised by how differently the workday passes without the comings and goings of an office to break things up or influence what you do next. Start each day of telework by writing down what you need to achieve and then track your progress. Pay attention to how long tasks take you and start adjusting your daily goals to match your current rhythm. Communicate with your Manager and/or colleagues if you think your telework plan needs to be adjusted.

5. **Eliminate distractions.**
Home can mean pets, children or a favorite hobby are only a few feet away. Depending on your living arrangement, do your best to minimize disruptions to maintain productivity during calls and meetings throughout business hours. Also, be mindful that your fellow colleagues are doing their best to do the same.

6. **Prioritize privacy.**
Whether you are in your home or a common area, take five minutes to assess the privacy of your workspace. Can someone standing behind you read your computer screen? Are your windows open so your neighbor can hear your phone call? What information do you need to secure before grabbing a cup of coffee or heading to the restroom? Your personal privacy matters too, so see if there is anything around you that you would not want visible during a video conference with your boss or colleague.

7. **Continue to employ privacy and security best practices.**

   o Situations like this are prime phishing opportunities. Remain vigilant for security concerns and be sure to report suspicious emails to ITS thru Mines Help Center>Information Security ticket.

   o You are expected to follow the expectations outlined in the university's [data policies](#) on the Information Technology Policies page under the Institutional Data and Security heading.

   o It should be noted that caution needs to be taken when dealing with Restricted and Confidential Data while working from home or another off-site location. If you are working with Restricted and Confidential Data, you must apply all Mines required security safeguards and policies at the same level as if you were working from your campus office in order to protect such information from unauthorized disclosure, loss, or damage. If you have questions, contact the Responsible Administrative Unit listed in the applicable policy.

   o VPNs can also allow you to safely connect to a remote network of computers as if you are there. If you are dealing with sensitive information and want to explore VPN, you can learn more at https://its.mines.edu/it-services-continuity/remote-resources/

   o If you have a privacy incident, reach out to Compliance, Policy and Risk Management through Mines Help Center>Services>Information Privacy Requests or Issues ticket.

   o If you have a security incident, reach out to ITS through the Mines Help Center>Information Security ticket.

8. **Stay connected.**
   Many people say they do not call or instant message colleagues who are working remotely because they don't want to bother them. Remember, they are working, not vacationing at home. You should feel confident about calling or messaging an employee who is teleworking anytime you would walk to their office or call them if you were working on-site.

9. **Employees are responsible for returning all Mines' assets. Upon separation with Mines',** if these assets are not returned, Mines' will deduct the current value from the employee's final paycheck.