

WS Directive

4.103 10/31/05

TELEWORK PROGRAM

1. PURPOSE

To set forth WS policy, procedures, and supervisory/employee guidance for participation in the Telework Program.

2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This directive revises WS Directive 4.103 dated 7/14/98.

3. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions will apply regarding the Maxiflex tour of duty and the Telework - alternative workplace:

a. Local Commuting Area. The distance that employees can reasonably be expected to travel on a daily basis to and from their traditional workplace.

b. Official Duty Station. The limits of the official duty station will be the corporate limits of the city or town in which the employee is stationed. If the employee is not stationed in an incorporated city or town, the official duty station is the reservation, station, or established area, or, in the case of large reservations, the established subdivision thereof.

c. Traditional Workplace. The facility at which the primary duties of the position would normally be carried out.

4. BACKGROUND

Telework is a flexible workplace wherein an employee is allowed to work away from the traditional workplace, either at home or at an approved alternative location.

Telework is a management option rather than an employee benefit. Accomplishment of the Agency's mission takes precedence over telework participation. Management has the right to remove an employee from the telework program if the employee's performance declines, if the program fails to benefit the organization's mission and service delivery, or other compelling justification as the supervisor deems appropriate.

5. POLICY

It is WS policy to provide for an alternative workplace in accordance with Federal, Departmental, and Agency regulations in

a manner which promotes the efficiency of the program, does not impact customer service, and is fair and equitable to the employees. Cooperative employees managed under non-Federal personnel systems are subject to duty station requirements as established by those systems.

Any WS employee may request telework, but only WS employees on full-time, permanent appointments of more than 1 year and a fully successful performance rating will have an opportunity to be approved. Telework is only authorized within the local commuting area. Each request will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Evaluations for Telework will include office coverage, performance, impacts on customer service, program needs, duties and responsibilities of the position, medical disabilities or recoveries, and personal/family responsibilities. Medical disabilities or recoveries must be accompanied by a physician statement documenting the medical condition and options for accommodation. Office coverage constitutes having at least one individual available to answer the telephone or greet customers and one staff position on duty. Telework will not be used as a substitute for child or elder care. If there are children or elders requiring care at the Telework location, then an adult other than the employee must be on the premises to provide child or elder care.

The responsibility for approving telework agreements will rest with the State Director (with signature concurrence from the appropriate Assistant Regional Director), Field Station Leader (with signature concurrence by Research Program Manager), NWRC Management, or member of the WS Management Team, as appropriate.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees may work at home or at a satellite office for a maximum of 3 days per week, excluding Saturday and Sunday, unless a medical disability or recovery precludes work at the traditional workplace. When working at an alternative workplace, individuals must be available by telephone during designated working hours. A schedule and phone numbers will be made available as the supervisor deems necessary. Meetings with the Telework employee will be held at a Government-owned or leased facility.

Scheduling of Telework days may vary from pay period to pay period. In some instances, supervisors may require employees to be available at their duty station on a day previously scheduled for work at home. Employees are responsible for ensuring their availability for meetings and other responsibilities, as directed by their supervisors, because work requirements take precedence over participation in the Telework program.

7. PROCEDURES

Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) has automated the telework application system to streamline the MRP Form 210-R Telework Agreement application process. The telework application

process is now a web-based process for individuals to complete an agreement for review and approval. To request telework, follow the procedure described in the MRP teleworking policy provided at the following online addresses.

For supervisor access to the application process use the following online address:
http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/manuals_guides/telework/spvr_welcome.html

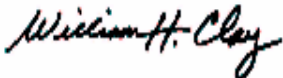
For employee access to the application process use the following online address:
http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/manuals_guides/telework/emp_welcome.html

8. INQUIRIES

Further guidance may be obtained by contacting the APHIS Telework Program Coordinator, MRP/HRD at (301) 734-6466.

9. REFERENCES

MRP Directive 4368.1, Telework Program (06/08/05).
Human Resources Desk Guide Subchapter 4368, Telework Program.
APHIS, (http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr_telework.html).
USDA Departmental Regulation 4080-811-2, Teleworking Program.
Office of Personnel Management, (<http://www.telework.gov>).



Deputy Administrator