

## Planning to Go Remote

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

**Understand relevant policies.** Review the following telework-related policies and practices which are detailed in the College's [Emergency Telecommuting Policy](#). Supervisors should verify that their employees have read and understood this information.

**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 and ensure employees know how to access your team's local technical support should they need assistance.

- Ensure employees know how to set up call forwarding and how to access your voicemail from home.
- 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. MMC employees have free access to Zoom video conferencing, Office 365, and Free Conference Calling.

**Review work schedules.** Telework sometimes get confused with flex work. 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.

1. **Keep regular hours:** Make those hours known to the team and ensure the team members have communicated with you and fellow team members.
2. **Be available:** Be sure your team members know when you're available, and the best way to reach you. – email, instant messaging, cell phone, etc.

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

- 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?
- What routine responsibilities/tasks require regular communication and collaboration with others? Proactively contact each partner to confirm how you will communicate while everyone is working remotely.
- Oftentimes employees experience fewer interruptions while teleworking. Are there any special projects or tasks that you can advance while working remotely?
- What events or meetings are scheduled during the time in which the emergency 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?

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**Make a communication and accountability plan.** Supervisors should tell employees how often they should send updates on work plan progress and what those updates should include. Supervisors should also communicate how quickly they expect the employee to respond while teleworking and the best ways for the employee to contact the supervisor while working remotely.

- Focus on the outcomes of the work, not the presence of the employee.
- 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.
- **Conduct regular check-ins.** Start each workday with a phone, video 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.
- **Address common concerns:** If you are finding a common concern, anything that multiple people have raised, address it using the tool you have established as the best way to stay in touch.
- **Collaborate:** Use collaboration tools to share work and keep work teams and project teams updated on progress and stay on track. Examples are Box or Microsoft Teams.
- **Maintain boundaries:** Set standard rules for escalating person-to-person communications. There may be legitimate reasons to communicate via cell call or text, but caution your staff to respect boundaries; not every message is urgent.
- **Walk the talk:** Reinforce communication norms. If you don't do it, don't expect anyone else to.
- **Be flexible:** Different environments, different job duties and new developments mean employees will have different needs. Please work with each employee individually to ensure they have the technology they need to do their job.
- **Virtual Team Building:** Consider scheduling time for team interaction by hosting a virtual lunch, coffee time or happy hour.

**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 supervisors. 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, telemanagers will improve their organizational abilities and their own skill in managing by objectives.

**Debrief after normal operations resume.** Employees and supervisors 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.

# Going Remote - Manager Checklist

## Phase 1 -One Week Prior to Launch – Emergency Telecommuting Transition

*Supervisor*  
*Employee*  
*Dept POC*

Complete Position Assessment for all members of the team

X

Based on Position Assessment, create list of positions appropriate for telecommuting

X

Identify team member who is point of contact for meetings and admin support

X

X

X

Set up remote call or meeting with team to test technology

X

X

Brainstorm with team to determine best use of team member's time

X

X

Set goals for team and individuals

X

X

## Phase 2 – Launch Week

Frequent meetings with team (daily, every other day or weekly)

X

X

Set expectations for team (i.e. response time for communication)

X

X

Admin POC collects daily schedules from team members. Share w/ team.

X

X

X

Set individual meetings with team members as necessary

X

X

Assess what is working and what is not working as telecommuting begins

X

X

Attend online training programs provided

X

X

## Phase 3 – Ongoing telecommuting

Schedule progress check-in meetings with team

X

X

Schedule individual progress meetings

X

Continue to Assess goals and alter accordingly

X

X

## Going Remote - Communication Etiquette

In situations where more and more people may be working remotely, consider extra steps you may need to take to maintain good communication and respectful interactions between colleagues.

- **Talk to your manager:** Make sure your manager and colleagues know what you are working on. If you're not having regular in-person interactions, it's easy to duplicate efforts.
- **Agree on common tools and a virtual space:** Follow a standard practices within your team to maintain communication.
  - Your manager will provide guidance so everyone knows how the team plans to stay connected and updated.
  - Create Microsoft Teams collaboration groups as needed.
- **Be predictable:** Work your regular hours. Let your manager and team know about variances so key contacts know when you are available versus when you are out sick or taking vacation time.
- **Use Auto Response:** Consider an automated response on your email such as: "Thank you for your patience if my response is delayed. I am working remotely to promote a healthy work environment and will respond as soon as possible."
- **Be respectful:** Technology makes it easy to reach out to cell phones via a call or text at any time of day. In some cases, there may be legitimate reasons to communicate quickly. However, be sure to respect boundaries; not every message or issue is urgent.
  - It's challenging for people working in non-traditional settings, be patient if you do not get a response to messages right away.
  - If you have something that doesn't need a response quickly let the other person know that, too!
  - Learning to work outside the office is challenging, so avoid breaking coworkers' concentration unless it is necessary.
- **Forward your phone:** Make it easier for coworkers to reach you by forwarding your university phone number to your mobile device or home phone.