

5 key points in developing a telework policy



Ryan Neumeyer | Monday, March 23, 2020

States and the federal government are requesting that employers allow employees to telecommute. Some states may even mandate telework in the wake of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Below are five things you should consider when developing a telework policy:

1. Eligibility

Determine which job functions do not have to be performed at a worksite and can be performed from home. Not all jobs can be performed from off-site locations. In general, positions requiring face-to-face interaction with clients are not suitable for telework arrangements.

Typically, you should determine what employees are most suited for telework arrangements. You might want to consider how long

the employee has been employed by the company and ensure they possess good time-management and organizational skills and are self-motivated, self-reliant, and disciplined.

However, with the current COVID-19 crisis, you may not have the luxury of such eligibility requirements. Thus, it will be paramount to devise a method of reporting. Instant messaging is a good option to ensure employees are logged in and actually working.

2. **Work schedules**

Ensure that employees are able to carry out the same duties, assignments, and other work obligations at their home office as they do when working on premises. Notify employees of the workweek and the hours that are expected. Ensure telework employees know to be available to their supervisors and co-workers during work hours.

3. **Approval process**

Ensure that there is an approval process. Create a form to process telework arrangements. Provide a statement by which the telework arrangement can be suspended at anytime at the employer's discretion.

4. **Equipment/furnishings/office supplies**

Decide what equipment will be provided to staff, including, but not limited to, computers, telephones/smart phones, copiers, printers, fax machines, furniture, common office supplies, such as paper, pencils, pens, and paper clips, for teleworking employees' use in their home offices.

Ensure data security by working with information technology experts to follow data privacy best practices.

5. Wage payments

Ensure that non-exempt employees who are working from home track their time so that they can be paid properly for all time worked.

Exempt employees who are working from home must be paid their full salaries for the week. Exempt employees do not need to be paid their full salaries for the week if they take full days off for personal reasons. Exempt employees who stay home and who are not working can use paid time off/sick leave. If an employee runs out of paid time off/sick leave then the leave would be unpaid. Generally, deductions must be in full day increments. This means that if a sick exempt employee works from home even for a short time, the employee must be paid his or her salary for working that day. The exception to the full day pay requirement is when an exempt employee is using FMLA leave time. If an exempt employee is absent for part of a work day and the absence counts as FMLA leave, the employer can deduct from the exempt employee's salary in the specified time increments.

If the FMLA is amended as per Families First Coronavirus Response Act, to provide paid leave for issues relating COVID-19, the issue will be whether an exempt employee who is working from home will be entitled to two-thirds salary or full salary. [Click here for more information](#) on the Families First Coronavirus

Response Act.



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