

WORKING FROM HOME TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS

Each member of your team is essential and has responsibilities to help the organization be successful, especially during challenging times.

Employers should deliver clear expectations to your entire workforce.



HOME OFFICE

Employees need dedicated workspace and the right equipment do their jobs effectively.

- Employees should be encouraged to find or create a quiet, well-lit area in their home to conduct their work with as few distractions as possible.
- Communication is key, especially during a period of rapid change. Talk to your employees about what they need to do their jobs.
- Make sure you know what technology, Internet connectivity and equipment your employees have available at home and discuss what they can bring from work.
- Consider creating an inventory of items if employees bring home company equipment to use temporarily.
- Employees should keep all company documents or sensitive information in a secure location and out of public view. Especially important for HR folks or others who handle sensitive information.
- Look at online storage like Dropbox or Google Drive to save documents where everyone can access them from multiple locations (cloud storage).



TIME MANAGEMENT

Working from home is not vacation time.

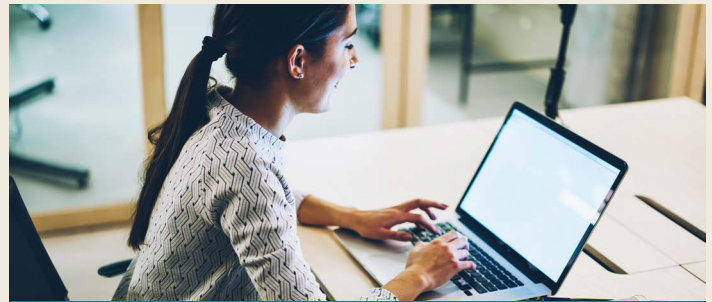
- Employees are expected to be available to perform their duties between regular working hours (ex: 8-5 with time off for lunch/breaks if applicable).
- Establish a familiar routine with your team. Certainty and stability can lead to fewer distractions.
- Deviations to a normal work schedule should be scheduled in advance with a supervisor. If the employee has something that is going on that they can't work or that will cause excessive distraction, assure your employee it is ok to use vacation time.
- Use a centralized calendar that the entire team can see. Encourage employees to schedule a time that they are unavailable to carry out normal duties (ex: Dr appointment) and list it on the centralized calendar for supervisors and team members to plan around absences. If an event is not on the calendar, the assumption is that the employee is available and ready to work.
- Encourage healthy snacking and to take stretch breaks to avoid long periods in front of the computer.



COMMUNICATION

People need space to talk right now; employees are very confused and worried about the future of their jobs.

- Explain to employees that work projects/priorities may shift in light of rapidly changing external circumstances and that good communication with supervisors is key. Nothing is carved in stone at this point as far as workflow, and there is a need for all to be flexible.
- Encourage employees to ask questions. Ask questions of your employees too. “Are you doing ok? How is your family doing? Is working from home going ok? What do you like/dislike about working remotely? How can I help?” If people are asking questions, they are engaged and not detached from other co-workers.
- Carving out just general “talk time” is important for supervisors to be aware of and make time for employees.
- Hold frequent calls (ex: daily, weekly) or group email discussions led by organizational leaders, management or supervisors to establish organizational values, priorities and assist with workflow. These types of calls can help employees understand priorities and how to manage time effectively.
- Consider looking at a network platform such as SLACK for group chats and instant communications to cut down on email traffic.



REGULAR REPORTS & UPDATES

A daily or weekly activity report can be a helpful resource to keep everyone connected when working remotely.

- Request updates from employees on what they are working on and how management can support employee needs while working from home.
- Schedule “check-in” calls to discuss the report with the employee and express appreciation for their work. Make sure the employee knows you are reading their report. A lot of time goes into creating reports.
- Set goals and time frames on what projects and tasks need to be completed (and when).

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- **Who Moved My Cheese Audio CD** – Available at <https://www.amazon.com/Moved-Cheese-Spencer-Johnson-M-D/dp/0743582853>
- **Work Together Anywhere: A Handbook on Working Remotely—Successfully—for Individuals, Teams, and Managers** - Available at <https://www.amazon.com/Work-Together-Anywhere-Remotely-Successfully-Individuals-ebook/dp/B07C2TTZ-VG>

VIDEO & CONFERENCE CALLS TIPS

1. Make sure your employees have the right equipment, high-speed Internet access and technology resources available to them.
2. Give employees a written short “how-to” guide on connecting to conference calls and video conferences. If something is not working, who do they reach out to for troubleshooting?
3. Establish protocols, such as having mute on unless you are speaking. It is ok to practice and do some trial runs together as a team.
4. Remind employees to wear appropriate attire and be mindful of their surroundings and background when conducting video calls. Pajamas and bathrobes should be avoided on video calls.
5. Ask employees to keep distractions at a minimum during calls. (Ex: keep pets quiet, don’t answer the doorbell and mute computer alarms).
6. Have a communications back up plan in case connectivity goes down. Be patient and understanding. Technology glitches happen to everyone, especially when circuits are very busy and over-tasked due to high volume.

This document is not intended to offer legal advice. Employment situations are unique to every business and specific industries.

Please consult your legal advisor or the Wyoming State Bar for an attorney referral to address specific questions about local, state or federal employment laws.