Remote Work for Employees

Employees who telework often learn that working remotely is different than they expected and that it requires specific skills and habits. The following tips will help you get to work while at home.

1. **Define your workspace.**
   Experienced teleworkers will tell you that it is 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, gives your brain a cue that it is time for work. Wearing attire that you may wear to the office even if it is your "casual Friday" attire may cue the brain. You should remain capable of reporting to work if your presence is requested by your supervisor.

2. **Master the basics.**

   o   Set up call forwarding and how to access your voicemail from home.

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

   o   Use Skype for Business, Zoom, WebEx or another instant messaging client 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.

   o   IT has provided instructions on their webpage.

3. **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 supervisor and/or colleagues if you think your telework plan needs to be adjusted.

4. **Eliminate distractions.**
   Home can mean pets, children or a favorite hobby are only a few feet away. Depending on your living arrangement, you may need to hang a "do not disturb" sign so your family members don't interrupt you. Pets often need a closed door to keep them away and you might need headphones to block the noise.

5. **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.

6. **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.