

## OAR TELEWORK FAQ'S

This FAQ is based on the most recent version of the DOC telework policy (October 2014). The Commerce policy is based on the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-292).

**Q1. Is Telework required?**

**A1.** An employee's decision to telework is voluntary unless telework is a condition of employment or is required to continue Government operations in times of emergency. In these instances, an employee may be required to work at home or at another approved alternate worksite. While it is not mandatory, OAR strongly encourages employees have an Ad hoc telework agreement in place in event of emergency. (See DOC, Part VII.C and F)

**Q2. Who is eligible to telework?**

**A2.** All employees are eligible unless:

1. They have been officially disciplined for being absent without permission for more than five days in a calendar year (no exceptions).
2. The employee has been officially disciplined for violations of ethical conduct policy for viewing pornography, downloading, or exchanging pornography, including child pornography, on a Federal Government computer or while performing official Federal Government duties (no exceptions).
3. The employee's performance does not comply with the terms of the written agreement between the supervisor and the employee.
4. The employee's position is not eligible for telework.

**Q3. Are all positions eligible for telework?**

**A3.** All positions are eligible for telework unless:

1. The official duties require the daily (every workday) direct handling of secure materials determined to be inappropriate for telework by the head of the bureau/operating unit.
2. The employee performs on-site activities that cannot be handled at an alternate worksite. (See DOC, Part V)

**Q4. Can we continue to use the current NOAA Telework Agreement forms?**

**A4.** No. We are required to use the DOC Telework form until NOAA issues a new Telework agreement package based on the DOC Policy dated October, 2014.

**Q5. What are the types of Telework?**

**A5.** There are two levels (Plans) of telework:

1. **PLAN A** (Ad HOC/Unscheduled Teleworking) -- limited to no more than 80 hours of ad hoc telework during the term of the individual telework agreement (per year). Employee is not required to telework when the office is closed due to unforeseen circumstances.
2. **PLAN B** (Employees on Regular/Recurring Telework Schedule) – Routine telework in which telework occurs as part of a regular, ongoing schedule. Employee **MUST** telework when the office is closed due to unforeseen circumstances, unless otherwise excused by supervisor. Employees performing unscheduled telework under an OPM announcement may do so without prior supervisory permission. However, the employee must notify his/her supervisor in accordance with the terms of the written agreement. The employee is responsible for ensuring he/she has sufficient work for the telework period.

**Q6. Is there training available for Telework?**

**A6.** Yes. Employees must successfully complete “Telework 101 for Employees” via the Commerce Learning Center (CLC) before they can request telework. The certificate of completion must be attached to the telework application. The training is required once per fiscal year.

**Q7. Where can I find the training?**

**A7.** CLC at: <https://doc.learn.com>

**Q8. Who is the Approving Official for Telework Agreements?**

**A8.** The immediate supervisor is responsible for approving employee telework agreements. The approving official and the supervisor may be the same person, in some cases. Lab, Program or Staff Office Directors may re-delegate approving official responsibilities to second level supervisors in order to maintain consistent application across multiple offices. The new DOC Telework form only allows for the signature of the Approving Official.

**Q9. Can a teleworker provide care for children while teleworking?**

**A9.** No. Although an employee is not to provide dependent/child care while teleworking, the employee may telework during those periods he or she is not responsible for dependent/child care activities. If the elders, children, or other dependents are able to care for themselves then their presence at the telework location would not interfere with the employee performing his/her telework, unless in violation of local or state law(s). The alternative worksite should be treated no differently than the office.

**Q10. Are employees required to telework when the office is Closed (such as on inclement weather days)?**

**A10.** No, if they are Plan A (ad hoc). Yes, if they are Plan B (regular scheduled), regardless of whether the day falls on their regularly scheduled telework day or not.

On a case-by-case basis, the supervisor may excuse a Plan B telework-ready employee from duty without charge to paid personal leave during an emergency situation if:

1. The emergency adversely affects the telework site (loss of power or network connectivity).
2. The telework-ready employee’s duties are such that he/she cannot continue to work without contact with the regular worksite.

**Q11. Is IT equipment provided for Telework?**

**A11.** No. Equipment is not required to be provided for telework. However, many offices are supporting a mobile workforce with office equipment that can be used by teleworkers as well (e.g. laptops with docking stations). There are also remote access resources available for teleworkers such as Google Email, Calendar, and Drive and anti-virus software. Check with your local IT support staff to see what resources may be available for your office.