

7 April 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL NY DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEER EMPLOYEES

SUBJECT: Telework Program

REFERENCES:

- a. Memorandum from CEHR-D (672-206) dated 1 March 2002, Subject: Telework
- b. CEHR-D (690-900) dated 24 Jan 2002, subject: Quality of Worklife flexibilities
- c. Division Commander Policy Memorandum #5
- d. DOD Telework Guide
- e. DOD Telework Policy

MISSION STATEMENT: This program provides employees with the flexibility of an alternative workplace while maintaining the ability to efficiently and effectively execute the mission of the New York District. All employees will be given an equal opportunity to apply for this program.

1. Types of Telework: DoD offers two types of telework arrangements. The intent in offering two types of telework is to provide supervisors, managers, and employees with maximum flexibility to establish an arrangement that is responsive to their particular situation.

A. Regular and recurring telework means an approved work schedule where eligible employees regularly work at least one day per biweekly pay period at an alternative worksite.

B. Ad hoc telework means approved telework performed at an alternate worksite on an occasional, one-time, or irregular basis. (Telework of less than one day per pay period is considered ad hoc). Such situations may occur throughout the year or be a one-time event. Ad hoc telework may also cover short-term assignments, for example, for employees recovering from injury or illness. Agreement for ad hoc telework, does not confer eligibility for regular and recurring telework. The manager should retain a record of the number of employees who undertake approved ad hoc telework and the incidence of such telework.

2. Reasons for Telework: It is USACE policy to enhance the quality of worklife by providing telework to all eligible employees.

Benefits of this program include:

- A. Attracting and retaining high quality employees;

B. Accommodating disabled employees or employees with continuing health problems.

C. Improving morale by giving employees more time to balance work and family (saves time on long commutes to and from work).

D. Decreasing traffic congestion, parking problems, energy consumption, and air pollution;

E. Providing services when regular office schedules are interrupted.

F. Promoting individual productivity.

3. POLICY STATEMENT: Managers must look closely at their organizations to see how to maximize use of this telework program. Supervisors are encouraged to review all proposals with a goal of maximizing eligible employees participation in the telework program.

4. Selection Criteria: All employees who would like to participate should first discuss the program benefits, both organizational as well as personal, with their immediate supervisor. The results of this discussion should be recorded on the attached form, Appendix A, signed by both parties, and sent to the Division/Office Chief and the Human Resources Office. The decision to permit or deny participation in a telework arrangement is at the sole discretion of the approving official. Participation is voluntary, is not a condition of employment and is not an employee right.

The following will be considered by supervisors in deciding whether to approve an employee's request.

A. Position Suitability:

(1) Type of work suitable for working at an alternate worksite:

- a. Work that requires studying and writing, such as data analysis, reviewing cases or reports, writing decisions or reports; doing research
- b. Telephone intensive tasks, such as setting up a conference, obtaining information, following up on participants in a study;
- c. Computer related tasks, such as programming, data entry, word processing.

(2) Positions that may be unsuitable for working at an alternate work site:

- a. Requires routine face-to-face contact with the supervisor, other employees, customers, or the general public;
- b. Requires routine access to material which can not practically be moved from the official duty station;
- c. Wage Grade employees (i.e. WG, WS, WL, XF, XG, XH) who perform duties that are worksite dependent and, therefore, are unsuitable for this program.
- d. Trainee or entry level positions.

B. Employees: To be considered eligible for telework participation, employees must meet the following minimum requirements:

- (1) Be employed on a full time schedule.
- (2) Be employed by the Corps of Engineers for at
- (3) least 6 months.
- (4) Be currently evaluated no less than successful or higher on TAPES evaluation.
- (5) Have no restrictive leave problems or any disciplinary actions.
- (6) Have a history of reliability and responsibility in discharge of work duties and of producing high quality work.
- (7) In consultation with their supervisor, fully understand their responsibilities and associated expectations of their role in connection with the work performed by their office.
- (8) Be able to establish priorities and manage time.
- (9) Be self-motivated and able to coordinate work effectively and without close supervision.

All requirements are to be individually considered and evaluated.

C. Employee Grievances: If an employee disputes the reason(s) given by a supervisor for not approving him or her for telework, or for terminating his or her telework agreement, the employee may submit a grievance using the agency administrative or negotiated grievance procedure, as appropriate.

5. Satellite Locations. Arrangements may be made to have employees work at satellite facilities if satellite locations are found and desk space and computer access is available.

6. Equipment needs and costs to the organization.

A. Funding for the Telework program is the responsibility of the New York District subject to FY Budget constraints. No additional USACE Army Funds are available to fund telework arrangements.

B. Employees may use their own personal computers when it does not involve access to the Corps network. Those employees that need access to the Corps network would be required to use notebook computers provided by the Government (see paragraph C below). Personal computers may be used to access email via the world wide web, provided the computer meets current Corps software standards as determined by IMO. When using a personal computer, the exact specifications must be provided to the Information Management Office in order to determine the appropriate software for the type of work the employee will be doing. Employees who choose to use their own home computers will be responsible for all maintenance and security upgrades required to access the District system.

C. The Corps of Engineers may authorize, but is not Required to provide notebook computers for those employees who do not have computers at home. This equipment must be capable of supporting the agreed upon work assignment to be performed at the alternate work site, and must be able to be compliant with current security and system requirements. Periodic maintenance of government-furnished notebook computers will be provided by the Government. Employees who are assigned Government notebook computers will be required to bring them into the office for servicing. No servicing of Government computers will be provided at non-government alternate work locations, except for situations related to reasonable accommodation of disabled employees.

D. Software for non-government computers will not be provided by the Information Management Office. Software for Government computers will be the standard configuration used in the district, unless additional software is requested and paid for by the Division/Office and installed by IMO.

E. Hardware and software costs will be borne by each Division/Office.

F. Communications. Communications will be provided in one of the following ways depending on specific needs:

- (1) 1 800 telephone number.
- (2) For access to the internet and E-mail purposes

an internet provider which is feasible and beneficial to the Corps of Engineers may be provided. Employees can use their regular internet provider if they choose for web access to E-mail, or direct dial by using one of the District 1-888 numbers.

(3) Employees may use their home phone line and be reimbursed for work-related usage subject to review of their phone bill and management approval.

(4) ISDN line or dedicated line to offsite government controlled facilities. This is the least likely solution, given the cost.

The option selected will be determined based on cost, computer configuration, type of work, type of software required, etc. Questions related to hardware, software, and communications will be answered by the Information Management Office.

7. Participation Procedures and Conditions:

A. Written Agreement: If, after discussion between the employee and the immediate supervisor, participation is seen as potentially beneficial and workable by the immediate supervisor, the employee should submit a written request Appendix B.1, which includes the request for telework and the safety checklist Appendix B.2.

(1) The written agreement at Appendix B includes: Employee name, title, series, grade, organization, and length of service with the Corps of Engineers.

(2) Exact days per week and hours to be worked at an alternate site. Indicate if an Alternative Work Schedule is in effect.

(3) Location of alternative work site in the home that will be used as the work-at-home space/area.

(4) Rationale for request (i.e. benefits for organization as well as benefits for employees).

(5) Detailed description of work to be performed at alternate site and work products that will be produced.

(6) Equipment needs and costs, if any.

(7) Proposed date to begin this arrangement.
Proposed end date, if any.

(8) A copy of the employee's latest performance rating.

B. Structure of arrangement: Generally a telework arrangement will be a maximum of five (5) days or 40 hours in a pay period. Supervisors and employees may agree to more flexible arrangements depending on mission and individual situations. The immediate supervisor and the employee will

propose how their particular arrangements will be structured within the following parameters:

(1) Official Duty Station: The official duty station remains the traditional office location for pay purposes. Local travel will not be paid to alternate work sites.

(2) Hours of Duty: Management makes the final determination on an employee's work schedule. Any Alternate Work Schedule (AWS) in effect is valid for alternate work site arrangements and continues within the same AWS guidelines as set forth under the original AWS agreement.

(3) Number of Days: Alternate work site days may be substituted due to occasional conflicts with the prior approval of the supervisor.

(4) Leave: Absences from scheduled tours of duty must be documented by means of an appropriate leave request for annual leave, sick leave, LWOP, etc.

(5) Overtime: Same regulations apply, supervisors should ensure that overtime is worked only with advance approval.

(6) Training, Travel or Meetings: Training, travel or critical meetings should not be rescheduled just because it is an employee's telework day. Alternate telework days may be substituted due to occasional conflicts with supervisory approval (frequent conflicts may warrant a permanent change to a participant's telework schedule).

C. Submission of Written Agreement: Once the written agreement is submitted by the employee to their immediate supervisor, the immediate supervisor will review this proposal and, if agreeable, he/she will forward this proposal to the approving official.

D. Safety Checklist: Each employee working from a telework site must sign a Self-Certification Safety Checklist, located at Appendix B.2., which certifies the work space safe prior to beginning a Telework arrangement.

Management may deny an employee the opportunity to participate or may rescind a telework agreement based on safety problems. Supervisors may request onsite inspection of a participant's work area for compliance with safety requirements when deemed appropriate.

When a supervisor or safety inspector is making an onsite home inspection at the home of an employee, an additional person shall accompany the person performing the inspection. The reason(s) for the visit shall be given to the employee in advance, and the employee's consent will be obtained prior to visiting the employee. If the employee refuses to

allow an inspection of the premises, the program may be terminated for that employee.

E. Telework Agreement: This is the formal contract between the Agency and the employee. It outlines the structure of the Telework arrangement and lists the responsibilities of the employee and the Agency. (Appendix A, B, & C. The Agreement form will be provided to the Human Resources Office and must be signed by the employee, the supervisor, and the approving official.

F. Telework Environment: The opportunity to work at an alternate worksite is offered only with the understanding that it is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that a proper work environment is maintained. Telework is not a substitute for childcare. Dependent care arrangements must be made so as not to conflict with the work schedule. The employee and his/her family must understand that the office in the home is just that, a space set-aside for the employee to work. Dependent care should be provided by a qualified care provider other than the telework participant. A supervisor may rescind a telework agreement if the telework environment is not clearly separated from dependent care.

G. Training: Telework participants (including supervisors) must receive an orientation on Telework Program and responsibilities. This will be provided by the Human Resources Office.

H. Extensions of the arrangement: Participants continuing in long-term arrangements may extend the existing Agreement upon mutual consent of the employee and the supervisor. At the time of the renewal, the arrangement should be reassessed by the supervisor and the employee to determine the need to revise or update the existing participation agreement.

I. Termination/Modification of the arrangement. Employee participation is not a right. Employee participation is voluntary. Participation in the program will be terminated and/or modified for just cause or if it is determined that either the mission or the employee's performance has been adversely impacted by the arrangement. Termination and/or modification of the arrangement will also occur when the employee leaves the office or division that established the current telework arrangement.

Supervisors or managers should provide at least a two (2) week written notice, if possible, prior to the termination and/or modification of participation. The two week notice

requirement will only be waived in the event of an appropriate work related requirement or for just cause. A memorandum terminating/modifying participation will be sent from the supervisor and the head of division or office to the participant. A copy of the termination/modification must be furnished to the Human Resources Office. Management reserves the right to review and existing arrangement when warranted upon a change in personnel occurs, i.e. supervisor, workload, mission, etc.

The employee may also end participation at any time. A termination letter will be submitted to the approving supervisor. A copy of the letter must be sent to the Human Resources Office.

Human Resource must ensure that sufficient data is maintained regarding the number of positions eligible for telework, the number of employees offered the opportunity to telework, and the number of employees who actually telework so that they may comply with DoD, Army, and USACE reporting requirements, when requested.

8. Other Considerations.

A. Position Description: There is generally no change in an employee's position description. If the arrangement continues for more than 1 year, some modifications may be required in the areas of management controls and work environment.

B. Performance Standards: As with the position description, managers should review the performance objectives and/or responsibilities at mid year review to ensure there are clear and objective standards of quality and quantity of work performed at the alternate work site for specific duties.

C. Equipment and Files Responsibility: The decision to install equipment for use in an employee's alternate work site is at the discretion of the immediate supervisor and approving officials.

D. Management must consider such criteria as the type of work, availability of existing and/or excess equipment and funding availability. The individual participant will be responsible for the transfer of any equipment to and from the office and the alternate work site.

E. Property accountability for all telework equipment must be maintained.

Additionally:

1. Any equipment assigned to a participant must be properly accounted for on a hand-receipt. Telework participants will bring in equipment for annual inventory or bar-code scan the item at the alternate worksite. Telework participants will pay for lost items.

2. Corps of Engineers equipment used at home may only be used for official purposes;

3. Government files, equipment, software and data must be kept secure;

4. Government supplied software provided by Information Management will be licensed to the Corps of Engineers. The employee will comply with all software and copyright license agreements which will be provided by IM.

5. Computer security policies in effect in the main work location will be applied at the alternate work location to protect hardware, software, and data, to include anti-virus safeguards.

6. The employee must notify the supervisor immediately when government-owned property is lost, damaged or malfunctions. Corps of Engineers is responsible for repairing COE equipment. The employee is responsible for equipment that is damaged due to negligence or misuse.

If the employee uses his/her own computer in performing his/her official duties under the telework agreement, he or she will remain the owner of the computer and is responsible for all maintenance and repair.

F. Telephones. If the telework participant obtains permission from their supervisor in advance, the agency will pay for the employee's authorized business-related long-distance phone calls after the employee submits an itemized telephone bill. The head of the Division/Office must certify that adequate safeguards against personal misuse exist, and that the service is necessary for direct support of the agency's mission. Employees will submit reimbursement requests for business related expenses in accordance with existing regulations. Supervisor approval is required.

G. Liability: The Army Corps of Engineers will not be liable for damages to an employee's personal or real property during the course of performance of official duties or when using the COE equipment at the alternate work site, except to the extent the government may be held liable by claims under the Federal Tort Claims Act or the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees Claims Act.

H. Compensation: Employees on Telework are covered under the Federal Employee's Compensation Act if injured in the course of actually performing official duties at the telework location. Reports of injuries must be carefully reviewed to ensure that they are work related and occurred during the employee's tour of duty. Accidents and injuries occurring at the Telework location are to be immediately reported to the Supervisor.

I. Home Utility Costs: Employees participating in Telework must understand that the government assumes no responsibility for employee expenses incidental to working at home, such as heating, electricity, water, and space usage. These expenses are offset by the benefits of working at home and reduced commuting, parking, meals, and clothing expenses.

J. DOD Mass Transportation Benefit Program and Telework Arrangements. When an employee's monthly commuting costs are reduced because of a telework arrangement, he/she must also reduce his/her "usual monthly commuting costs" under the Part C, Employee Certification section of the DOD Mass Transportation Benefit Program application.

9. Authority to Approve Telework Arrangements and Summary of Required Documentation. The authority to approve telework work arrangements lie with the Chief of the Office/Division. Since a second-line supervisor's approval is required, the Chief of Staff will approve Telework arrangements for the following offices:
SA, SE, EEO, PA, HR, LMO, VE, IR, OC.

The entire Telework package will consist of:

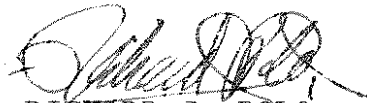
A. A detailed description of the proposed telework arrangement which includes the proposed alternate worksite schedule and office work schedule and the specific duties to be performed.

B. The request must include a completed copy of the Home Safety Checklist signed by the employee.

C. The approved Telework Agreement must be signed by the supervisor, the employee, and the approving official.

D. A copy of the telework package whether approved or disapproved must be submitted to the Telework Project Coordinator in the Human Resources Office.

10. Program Evaluation. Every 3rd year following the signing of this program, a telework committee consisting of a representative from the Human Resources Office, a management team, and union representative(s) will evaluate the program effectiveness. Information as to the success of the program will include recommendations/comments from management, union, and participating employees. The recommendations/comments will be compiled by the Human Resource Office. The Telework Committee will be comprised of equal numbers of management and union representatives. The committee will review the recommendations submitted and provide their findings to the Commander. The Commander ultimately has the final decision on all matters regarding the Telework program.



RICHARD J. POLO
COL, EN
Commanding

APPENDIX A:

INITIAL SELECTION CRITERIA FORM

DATE: _____

EMPLOYEE: _____

IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR: _____

ELIGIBLE FOR PROGRAM: _____

NOT ELIGIBLE FOR PROGRAM: _____
(Please state reasons for ineligibility.)

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE AND DATE: _____

IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE AND DATE: _____

DATE SENT TO HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE _____

APPENDIX B.1: WRITTEN AGREEMENT:

Employee:

LAST NAME FIRST NAME MIDDLE INITIAL

TITLE, SERIES, AND GRADE

DIVISION/OFFICE

LENGTH OF SERVICE WITH THE CORPS

DAYS IN BIWEEKLY PAY PERIOD EMPLOYEE IS AUTHORIZED TO TELEWORK:

| <u>DAY</u> | <u>PER WEEK</u> | <u>PER PAY PERIOD</u> | <u>WORK SCHEDULE</u> <u>REGULAR COMPRESSED</u> | <u>DUTY HOURS</u> |
|------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|-------------------|
| MON | | | | |
| TUES | | | | |
| WED | | | | |
| THURS | | | | |
| FRI | | | | |

ALTERNATIVE WORKSITE IS:
(GIVE ADDRESS OF HOME OFFICE OR ALTERNATE WORK AREA)

LOCATION OF HOME OFFICE OR ALTERNATE WORK AREA:

PHONE:
FAX:

EMAIL:

RATIONALE FOR REQUEST:

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF WORK TO BE PERFORMED AT HOME AND
WORK PRODUCTS THAT WILL BE PRODUCED.

EQUIPMENT NEEDS AND COSTS, IF ANY.

PROPOSED DATE TO BEGIN THIS ARRANGEMENT.

EMPLOYEE'S LATEST PERFORMANCE RATING.

EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE

DATE

IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE

DATE

DIV/OFFICE CHIEF SIGNATURE

DATE

APPENDIX B.2:

NY DISTRICT US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
SAFETY CHECKLIST - TELEWORK (WORK-AT-HOME) PROGRAM
EMPLOYEE CERTIFICATION

NAME _____ ORGANIZATION _____

Dear Participant:

The following checklist is designed to assess the overall safety of the alternative worksite. Each participant should read and complete the self-certification safety checklist. Once completed, the employee should sign and date it, and return a copy to the supervisor, Human Resources Office and retain a copy for his or her own records.

The alternative worksite is:

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

LOCATION: _____

Describe the work area.

1. Are temperature, noise, and lighting levels adequate for maintaining your normal level of job performance? YES ___ NO ___

2. Is adequate ventilation present for the desired occupancy? YES ___ NO ___

3. Is all electrical equipment free of recognized hazards that would cause physical harm (frayed wires, bare conductors, loose wires or fixtures, exposed wiring on the ceiling or walls)? YES ___ NO ___

4. Will the building's electrical system permit the grounding of electrical equipment (a three prong receptacle)? YES ___ NO ___

5. Are aisles, doorways, and corners free of obstructions to permit visibility and movement? YES ___ NO ___

6. Are file cabinets and storage closets arranged so drawers and doors do not open into walkways? YES ___ NO ___

7. Are the phone lines, electrical cords, and extension wires secured under a desk or alongside a baseboard? YES ___ NO ___

8. Is the official work area free of all tripping hazards? YES ___ NO ___

APPENDIX C:

NY DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
TELECOMMUTING PROGRAM
SUPERVISORY/EMPLOYEE APPROVAL CHECKLIST

The following checklist is designed to ensure that the telecommuting employee is properly oriented to the policies and procedures of the program.

NAME OF EMPLOYEE: _____

NAME OF IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR: _____

1. Employee has read the guidelines outlining the policies and procedures of the program. _____

2. Employees has been provided with a copy of Telecommuting agreement outlining the work schedule. _____

3. Employee has been issued equipment. _____

4. Equipment issued by the agency is documented. _____

Computer _____

Modem _____

FAX Machine _____

Telephone _____

Other _____

5. Policies and procedures for care of equipment issued by the agency have been explained and are clearly understood. _____

6. Policies and procedures covering classified, secure, or privacy act date have been discussed, and are clearly understood. _____

7. Requirements for an adequate and safe office and/or area have been discussed, and the employee certifies those requirements are met. _____

8. Performed expectations have been discussed and are clearly understood. _____

9. Employee understands that the supervisor
may terminate employee participation at any
time, in accordance with established
administrative procedures.

EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE AND DATE

IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR AND DATE

DIVISION/OFFICE CHIEF SIGNATURE AND DATE