

NAVIGATING TELEWORKING DURING UNCERTAIN TIMES

What is telework?

1. What are the benefits of teleworking?

2. What qualities/characteristics are necessary to be a successful teleworker?

Tips for Adapting to Working Remotely

- Understand expectations.
- Keep an open line of communication.
- Discuss long-term career goals with your leader.
- Make an effort to maintain/build relationships.
- Learn to use available technology to communicate.
- Continually work on improving communication skills.
- Have reliable Internet and phone services.
- Set up a clearly defined office area.
- Stay organized.
- Maintain a routine.
- Establish clear boundaries with your family .

What else would you add to this list?

3. What steps will you take to prepare or become more efficient as a teleworker?

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Email Etiquette

Email is not always the appropriate form of communication, as some situations will need to be addressed in a face to face meeting.*

*Due to the current situations, consider a phone call or video conference instead of in person meetings.

Generally, it's okay to use email if:

- You have an established, ongoing relationship with the receiver. This decreases the likelihood of miscommunication; the receiver is likely familiar with your communication style and understands when you are using humor or sarcasm.
- You need to relay information quickly to a lot of people; email is likely the most efficient way to do this.
- You need documentation of the conversation.
- Meeting face to face is not an option.
- The subject matter is basic and does not need a lot of explanation.

Generally, it's a good idea to avoid email if:

- This is the first communication with the receiver or a new relationship. The chances of miscommunication increase when the person is not familiar with your communication style.
- You need to brainstorm about an idea.
- Multiple parties are involved. Using email can get very confusing and difficult to follow.
- Explanation or clarification is needed. It's easier and clearer to communicate this in person.
- Always provide negative feedback in person.
- The subject matter is complex. This can get confusing and complicated if you use email.

Do:

- Be concise; people generally scan email quickly. You should be able to explain things in a few sentences. If it's going to take more than that, consider a face to face meeting.
- Use spell check.
- Use the subject line. Otherwise, people may skip over your email thinking it's not important.
- Read your email before sending it, read it for content, make sure it makes sense and flows well. If you find yourself having a strong emotional reaction, save your response as a draft, go back and read it in a few hours or the next day before sending.
- Use gender neutral language, when possible.

Avoid:

- Writing in all capital letters, as it can be difficult to read, and may be perceived as yelling.
- Use 'reply to all' frugally. Before replying to all, ask yourself if everyone really needs to have this information.
- Avoid using abbreviations or "jargon."
- Avoid sending confidential information.
- Avoid sending jokes which are generally inappropriate for workplace communication.

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Instant Messaging (IM) Etiquette

Instant messaging is an informal and immediate way to communicate. Here are some tips for using this tool to communicate.

- Keep the conversation short. Use this mode when you need a quick, brief answer; not to obtain or share detailed information.
- Mind the other person's status. If the person is listed as "Busy" or "Do Not Disturb," don't instant message as this can be perceived as intrusive.
- Make sure you have an established relationship with the person you are messaging. If you haven't met the person, don't use IM as the first mode of communication.
- Begin the conversation with a short greeting, such as "hello!"
- Be contentions of the receiver's preferred style of communication. Not everyone is comfortable using this modality.
- Be cautious when using abbreviations. People of different generations or cultures may not understand what might seem like a common abbreviation, such as "LOL."
- Don't make important announcements using this mode of communication. If delivering the information in person or phone is not possible, or you need it in writing, send it via email.
- End the conversation, such as "thanks!"

Video Chat Etiquette

- Be on time and introduce yourself; don't interrupt others; don't multitask.
- Speak clearly so others can understand you, and if you aren't sure others will be able to hear you, do a sound check before the meeting. Ask for input on how well others can hear you—too loud, too soft, breaking up, etc.
- Don't fidget. Excessive movement is distracting.
- Maintain eye contact with your video source—others want to know they have your attention.
- Don't carry on side conversation; verbally or via email or IM.
- Dress appropriately.
- Keep distracting noises to a minimum, such as drinks with ice, barking dogs, cell phones, noisy jewelry, papers, etc. These noises will be amplified over the audio connection and make it difficult to hear.

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Self-Assessment

1. Yes No I am comfortable working with no direct oversight.
2. Yes No I am a self-starter.
3. Yes No I enjoy working alone.
4. Yes No I can set boundaries with family.
5. Yes No I can structure my own day.
6. Yes No I can effectively communicate.
7. Yes No I have adequate resources to do my job from home.
8. Yes No I am highly motivated.
9. Yes No I have childcare as needed.
10. Yes No I am comfortable asking for assistance.

If you answer eight out of 10 of questions with "yes," the adjustment will probably be fairly easy. If you answer more than two "no," you may want to talk to your manager to discuss solutions to help you with the transition to teleworking.