

TELEWORK FAQs (For Above School-Level Employees)

Does the Administrative Instruction 5205.01, DoDEA Telework Program apply to everyone?

This AI does not apply to School/Installation-Level Administrators, Educators, and Support Staff. This AI also does not apply to bargaining unit employees until bargaining obligations are discharged.

Are supervisors eligible to telework?

Above School-Level supervisors at the GS and AD-13 and below levels are eligible to participate in the full range of telework options in accordance with AI 5205.01. Supervisors at the GS and AD-14 and 15 levels may normally only participate in situational telework. However, with the endorsement of their manager and approval by the Director, DoDEA, GS and AD-14 and 15 level supervisors may participate in regular telework.

What is regular telework?

An approved work arrangement where eligible employees work at an alternative worksite as part of an ongoing, regular, and recurring schedule, typically on an approved day or days during a bi-weekly pay period.

Are there circumstances under which I can be approved to telework for more than two days a week or four days a pay period?

Yes, but they are rare. One would be where there is such a shortage of work stations in your work group that it is necessary that employees begin sharing work stations. If that is the case, with the approval of the appropriate Associate Director or DoDEA Chief of Staff, an employee may be away from the office for five days a pay period, including any RDO, where necessary to implement desk sharing or other space management measures.

What is situational telework?

Telework that is approved on a case-by-case basis, where the hours worked were not part of a previously approved, ongoing and regular telework schedule (e.g., telework as a result of inclement weather, medical appointment, special work assignments, or to accommodate special circumstances). Telework is also considered situational even though it may occur continuously for a specific period and is also referred to as episodic, intermittent, unscheduled, or ad hoc telework.

What is medical telework?

Medical telework is used when an employee has a medical condition that prevents him or her from reporting to the official duty station but does not preclude the employee from performing his/her official duties at an approved telework location. medical telework is approved on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the supervisor. ***For more information, see page 15 in AI 5205.01, DoDEA Telework Program.***

Am I eligible to work regular telework?

It depends on several things. First, the Associate Director or DoDEA Chief of Staff must decide that the work of your position can be done on a regular, recurring basis at an alternate location. The work done at the alternate location must be able to be performed without interfering with efficiently and effectively accomplishing the agency's mission. Second, once a position is approved for regular telework, the Associate Director or DoDEA Chief of Staff will also decide how many days a week or pay period employees working in that position may telework. Finally, supervisors will then take that information and determine whether an individual applying to telework personally meets the criteria of the DoDEA policy and whether there are enough telework opportunities in the work group to accommodate an individual's request without adversely impacting the group's ability to accomplish its mission.

Am I eligible to work situational telework?

It also depends on a few things. First, the Associate Director or DoDEA Chief of Staff must agree that employees working in a position can occasionally work outside the office. Second, if a position is approved for situational telework the supervisors will examine employee requests to participate to determine who meets the criteria of the DoDEA policy. Once an employee's position is approved and s/he is approved, the employee will be free to request the use of situational telework on a case-by-case basis.

Note: Those on regular telework are automatically enrolled in situational telework. A separate agreement is not needed to participate in situational telework.

If I am approved to participate in either regular or situational telework, must I continue to work at my home on those days when the DoDEA office is closed due to weather or other emergency and other employees receive administrative leave for the day?

Yes, in most situations. Employees approved for regular and situational telework who are not able to report to their assigned office location will telework each regularly scheduled workday during the emergency, when the capability to telework is available at the alternative worksite. Employees may request leave while teleworking in those situations.

Am I entitled to switch my telework day if my regular telework day falls on a Federal holiday?

No. You are not entitled to an in lieu of telework day if your regular telework day falls on a Federal holiday. It would be at the supervisor's discretion to allow a switch of your regular telework day.

How will my work be monitored on the days I telework?

Supervisors will: 1) monitor the job performance of all employees, including teleworkers, to ensure the timely and efficient accomplishment of agency work; 2) hold employees who telework accountable to the same performance expectations and standards as employees who work on-site in like, or similarly-situated, positions; and 3) establish adequate management controls to ensure that teleworking employees are complying with the requirements of the AI 5205.01, DoDEA Telework Program.

How does my participation in a 5/4/9 CWS schedule impact my ability to also telework?

DoDEA HQ employees on a 5/4-9 CWS may be authorized to participate in regular telework up to three days per pay period.

How does my participation in a 4-10 CWS schedule impact my ability to also telework?

DoDEA HQ employees on a 4-10 CWS may be authorized to participate in regular telework up to two days per pay period.

How do I apply to work on either regular or situational telework?

Complete the online telework training for employees once the employee's position becomes eligible for telework, which can be found at <http://www.telework.gov>, before initiating a request to telework by submitting a DoD Telework Agreement, DD Form 2946 and copy of the training certificate.

If I am not approved to participate in telework, will I be told why not?

Yes. Supervisors will discuss with an employee the rationale for disapproval and/or determination for ineligibility to telework. The basis for the disapproval to telework or termination of a telework agreement must be provided in writing to the employee in the comments portion of the DoD Telework Agreement, DD Form 2946. A copy of this information must be maintained by the supervisor. Denials should be for legitimate business-related reasons, to include performance, current or recent disciplinary actions, inappropriate work habits, the needs of the employee's work group as well as those served by the workgroup and the lack of enough portable work.

Can I be required to telework if I do not want to?

No. An agency may not compel an employee to telework even if the duties of the position make that employee "telework eligible."

Note: However, those positions that are identified in the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) may be required to telework during COOP activations and exercises.

Can I terminate my telework arrangement?

Employees may voluntarily terminate their participation in a telework arrangement. Such requests should be submitted in writing and given to the employee's supervisor on DD Form 2946, Section IV, "Notice of Telework Arrangement Cancellation." Employees will normally provide at least 2 weeks' notice so that arrangements can be made to accommodate their return to work at the regular work site, if necessary. Employees with mission-critical duties may still be required to telework in emergency situations in support of the COOP. Reactivation of a telework arrangement will require a four-month waiting period.

What am I to do if I lose the ability to do work while teleworking, e.g., the power goes out, there is a significant on-going disruption at my house, etc.?

Immediately contact your supervisor to discuss the situation. S/he may ask you to report to your office, suggest you take leave, or develop an alternative way for you to continue to do DoDEA work.

Can I pick the days of the week I want to telework?

You should let your supervisor know the days you prefer to telework. However, your supervisor is obligated to schedule telework, AWS, and leave days to ensure that there is adequate office coverage during operational hours at the DoDEA location to assist those who may need same-day, on-site assistance. Consequently, the expectation is that available telework slots will be spread throughout the week to avoid everyone teleworking on the same days, e.g., Monday and Friday.

Can I take a break in the middle of a telework day to tend to something personal and just work longer hours that day?

Not without advance supervisory approval, which should only be granted rarely. If you need time off during regular duty hours, ask for annual leave.

Can my supervisor order me in to come to the DoDEA office to work when I am scheduled to telework?

Yes. The supervisor can order you to the office with a few days advance notice or s/he can call you during the work day and order you to the office. Supervisors are required to ensure that there are sufficient employees at the DoDEA office to take care of any on-site work that must be done. Also and in accordance with the Telework Agreement, teleworkers may be required to return to the regular worksite on scheduled telework days based on operational requirements.

Can I bank telework days and carry unused days over to the next pay period?

No. However, with a supervisor's advance approval, you might be able to switch telework days when in the supervisor's judgment it will not interfere with covering the obligations of the work unit.

The policy requires that my home meet certain requirements if I want to telework. How will the supervisor ensure that it does?

Generally, the supervisor will rely on an employee certifying that his/her home meets the policy requirements. Supervisors will also be expected to watch for signs that there might be a problem, e.g., the employee is unable to efficiently upload or download data due to inadequate Internet access. Management retains the right to have a supervisor physically inspect a teleworking employee's home, but that will be quite rare and never done without reasonable advance notice.

Will telework make more work for those who stay in the office?

No. Telework should not cause any extra work for non-teleworkers. Teleworking and non-teleworking employees must understand expectations regarding telework arrangements including coverage, communications and responsibilities. Also, managers should avoid distributing work based on "availability" by physical presence to avoid unfairly burdening coworkers who do not telework. Keep in mind good performance management practices are essential for telework to be effective and equitable.

How soon will my telework request be approved?

It depends. During the first 90 days of the new policy a lot of management decisions have to be made, e.g., which positions are eligible for regular telework, which employees are eligible for any kind of telework, how to fit all the telework requests together so as to grant as many as we can without damaging our ability to get our work done, etc. Managers and employees will also have to complete the prescribed on-line training. Consequently, it may take a few weeks to get to all requests at the outset. Once the first 90 days are over, however, requests should be acted on within two weeks generally.

If I currently telework, can I expect to keep the same arrangement?

Not necessarily. No later than 90 days after the effective date of the new policy everyone wishing to telework must be doing so consistent with the new DoDEA policy. Compliance with the new policy could result in changes to some current telework arrangements.

Once I am approved for regular telework and the days of the pay period I telework identified can I keep that schedule for my foreseeable future with DoDEA?

No. Telework is not an entitlement. Continuing on an approved telework schedule will depend on changes in the duties of a position, changes in the size of one's work group, increased demand for the employee's services on-site, and the employee's performance, at a minimum. Supervisors are required to review each employee's telework agreement at least annually and to make changes when needed.

Who has access to an employee's telework agreement after it has been signed?

Telework agreements will be kept by the employees' supervisors. Because they contain personally identifiable information (PII), such as home addresses and telephone numbers, access will be restricted and governed by the requirements of the Privacy Act of 1974 as codified at section 552a of title 5, United States Code.

Can I use telework to take care of dependent children or others on those days and save child care costs?

No. Telework is not to be used as a substitute for regular child care or dependent care services. Teleworkers should be free to work a full, uninterrupted day on DoDEA activities. However, if the employee has school age children who do not require on-going attention nor otherwise interfere with or interrupt the employee's work, the employee can telework.

Can I telework on days I am too sick to travel to the office and avoid taking sick leave?

Generally, if you are too sick to come to work you should take sick leave, rest, and promptly get the care you need so you can return to work as soon as possible. However, there may be times when you are well enough to work, but not well enough to travel to the office or be away from home for a long period. On those days, a supervisor may at his/her discretion approve you to telework on those days, if you are already approved for a regular or situational telework arrangement.

What can you do if your telework request is disapproved or terminated?

To begin, talk with your supervisor to make sure you know the reasons why your request was disapproved. Do not be reluctant to suggest ways to meet management's concerns. If you are still dissatisfied, you can file an administrative grievance under procedures described in DoDEA Administrative Instruction 5771.09. But remember, telework is not an entitlement.

Does an employee who uses a portion of his or her home for business qualify for any Federal Tax deductions?

DoDEA does not provide tax advice. If an employee has this question, s/he should contact the IRS via its customer service programs.

What codes should I use to annotate time and attendance records for telework?

Use TW for Telework Regular; TS for Telework Situational/Ad hoc; and TM for Telework Medical (both Situational and Regular).

What Rules of Conduct apply to me while I am teleworking?

All employees, including those who are teleworking, are subject to the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, Part 2635 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations. The Office of Government Ethics Standards lists the basic obligations of public service and conflict of interest statutes that prohibit certain conduct. If you are not sure of the regulatory or statutory restrictions, you should obtain the advice of an agency ethics official (OGC).